

S E R M O N S
AND
DISCOURSES
ON
PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

By ROBERT MOSS, D.D.
Late Dean of *Ely*, and Preacher to the
Honourable SOCIETY of *Grays-Inn*.

Published from the Original at the Request of the
said SOCIETY.

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To which is added,
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SERMONS



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CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

The Christian's Overthrow prevented, and
Conquest gained.

Rom. xii. 21.

*Be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil
with Good.* Page 1

SERMON II.

Preached before the Right Honourable the
Lord Mayor of London, &c.

Luke xii. 21.

*So is he that layeth up Treasure for himself, and
is not rich towards God.* 47

A 2

SER-

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M O N I I I.

Preached before the House of Commons.

Lament. v. 7.

*Our Fathers have sinned, and are not; and we
have born their Iniquities.* Page 81

S E R M O N I V.

The Providential Division of Men into *Rich*
and *Poor*, and the respective Duties thence
arising, briefly consider'd.

Prov. xxii. 2.

*The Rich and Poor meet together; the Lord is
the Maker of them all.* 131

S E R M O N V.

Preached at the Parish Church of St. Laurence-
Jewry, London.

2 Cor. iv. 5.

*For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus
the Lord; and ourselves your Servants for
Jesus Sake.* 169

CONTENTS.

SERMON VI.

Preached before the Queen at St. James's Chapel.

Ecclef. viii. 11.

Because Sentence against an evil Work is not executed speedily; therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men is fully set in them to do Evil.

Page 205

SERMON VII.

Preached at the Assizes holden at Kingston upon Thames, before the Right Honourable the Lord Chief Justice Parker, and the Honourable Mr. Justice Tracey.

Matth. vii. 12.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets. 245

SER-

SERMON VIII.

Let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts, &c.

Coloss. iii. 15.

*And let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts
to the which also ye are called in one Body
and be ye thankful.*

Page 26

SERMON IX.

Of Sacramental Communion.

1 Cor. x. 16.

*The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not
the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The
Bread which we break, is it not the Commu-
nion of the Body of Christ?*

31

SERMON X.

Of Christ's Humiliation.

Philipp. II. 5, 6, 7, 8.

*5. Let this Mind be in you, which was also
Christ Jesus:*

6. W

CONTENTS.

vii

Who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God :

But made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men :

And being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross. Page 345

S E R-



ERRATA.

PAGE 2. Line 8. read kind. p. 28. l. 10. r. unfortunate, p. 121. l. 11. r. aversion. p. 148. l. 7. r. refractory. p. 149. l. 6. r. may. p. 199. l. 11. r. they. p. 208 Margin r. *μῆτις*. p. 221. l. 15. r. possible. p. 270. l. 11. r. his own Doe. p. 273. wrong pag'd to the End of the Index. p. 377. l. ult. r. abasement. p. 392. l. 37. r. of our. p. 397. l. penult. after viii. r. 307. p. 398. l. 10. r. make. penult. r. hold. p. 399. l. 7. r. 145. Ibid. l. ante penult. r. Vol. I. 81—83. p. 400. l. 6. r. girded. p. 401. l. 8. r. Demetrius. p. 403. for Grounds Mr. r. Grounds Author of. p. 414. l. ult. r. Founder. p. 419. l. 17. r. Worldling compar'd. p. 420. l. 3. r. be. p. 421. l. 34. r. indefeibly. p. 423. l. 23. r. beset. p. 426. l. 27. r. Challenge. p. 433. l. 9. r. Precepts. p. 437. l. 4. ~~dele~~ that it was, r. to be. p. 440. r. lawful by the Romans. p. 441. l. 7. r. 244. Ibid. l. 15. r. *διδάχνη*, p. 442. l. 30. r. 365. p. 451. l. 18. ~~del~~ Rule or. Ibid. l. 19. r. Rule or. p. 452. l. 30. r. u. p. 453. l. 40. r. of. p. 454. l. 7. after 256. r. God neither the Author of, nor a Tempter to Sin, 285. 286, p. 458. l. 36. r. inexpedient, p. 459. l. 4, 5. r. libinous.

SERMON I.

The Christian's Overthrow prevented,
and Conquest gained.

ROM. XII. 21.

*Be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil
with Good.*

THERE is no one Gospel-Duty that
is more solemnly enjoin'd, or more
vehemently inforc'd, than that of
brotherly Love and Charity; and (as the ne-
cessary Preservative of that) mutual Forbear-
ance and Forgiveness. And indeed, (to use
some of St. Paul's own pathetical Words)
if there be any Consolation in Christ, if any Phil. ii. 2.
Comfort of Love, if any Fellowship of the Spi-
rit, if any Bowels and Mercies: That is, if
Men had any competent Sense of Tenderness

SERM.
I.

or Humanity, of the Endearments of reciprocal Love, of that spiritual Union and Sympathy which ought to be between those who are Members of the same Body, of the infinite Love of God, so kindly, so comfortably extended to us through his own dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ: — In brief, if the kindly Propensions of Nature, or the gracious Influences of the Holy Spirit had their due Operation upon Mens Hearts, we might well expect to see the happy Effects of it in their Christian Deportment one towards another in their Kindness and Tender-heartedness, their Humbleness of Mind, their Meekness and Long-suffering, and their Readiness to forgive even as God, for Christ's Sake, is merciful to forgive them.

This, I confess, appears extreamly reasonable in Speculation, considering the many Engagements, and the powerful Inducements that we have to the Performance of this Duty. But yet, God knows, there is but little of it to be seen in Practice and Experience.

For alas! there is so gross an Allay of Weakness and Corruption in human Nature; so many Seeds of Discord in our very Make and



d, and Conquest gained.

3

SERMON

I

constitution ; such Disorder in our Passions ; such Disagreeableness in our Tempers ; such interfering in our Interests ; so many Occasions of Offence, given, or taken ; so many Stones of Contention, to set us a Snarling and biting, and Devouring one another, that it must needs require a very great Composedness of Mind, and no moderate Degree of Grace, to stifle the Sense of Injuries which is usually very keen, and to suppress the Desire of Revenge, which is every whit as passionate ; and to keep up our Christian Charity still warm and fervent, amidst so much, and (as it will always appear to the present Sufferer) such provoking Iniquity as the World abounds with.

And therefore, since this must be confess'd to be a Pitch of Virtue that has its Difficulties, our Blessed Lord was pleased to lay his Command on us, in Words as clear and as full as possible, *to love our Enemies, to bless them that curse us, to do Good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us.* And this Command has pressed upon us by all the Considerations of Duty and Gratitude, and by the most

Matth. 5.
44, &c.

engaging Motive of his own matchless Example. And, lest any Thing should be wanting that might win upon us, the Spirit of God has vouchsafed to ply us (if I may so speak) with all Variety of Arguments; and, in particular, so far to condescend to our Infirmities, as to convince us of the Reasonableness and Expediency of complying with this our Christian Duty; for which, his Authority alone, who injoin'd it, might have serv'd instead of all other Reasons.

And of this the Text is one gracious Instance. For, after the Apostle had strictly inhibited Revenge, *Ver. 19*, as being an Invasion upon God's Prerogative; and directed to a more innocent Way of vindicating ones self *Ver. 20*, by such Acts of Kindness and charitable Benevolence, as might be enough to mollify and melt the very Heart of an Enemy; he adds at last, as a Close to the whole Exhortation, *Be not overcome of Evil, but overcome Evil with Good*. In which he plainly points at the Folly and Unhappiness of a vindictive Temper; and the Prudence and Privilege of the contrary: Inasmuch as the one apparently lays a Man open to greater

ed, *and Conquest gained.*

5

SERM.
I.

Inconveniences than those, which he en-
deavours to ward off by Revenge; (which is
Weapon indeed made only for Offence) sub-
jecting him to his Enemy; and rendring him
Slave to his Passion; and exposing him to
all those Sins, and to the ill Consequences of
those Sins, into which such a furious Passion
may happen to drive him. Whereas the o-
ther, *i. e.* a mild and forgiving Nature makes
Man perfectly superior to his Enemy; and
at the same Time an absolute Master of him-
self; enabling him, even when he is most
viciously assaulted, still to maintain his Charity,
and to preserve his Innocence.

And it shall be my Endeavour at present,
from these Topicks,

I. *First*, To dissuade and deter you from
the Practice of Revenge, by making you sen-
sible of the great Inconveniences and Hazards,
to which you must needs stand expos'd in thus
suffering yourselves to be overcome of Evil:
To which Part of the Argument I shall sub-
join some special Directions, that may help
to prevent this fatal Overthrow. And,

II. *Secondly*, To incite you, if I can, and
win you over to the Practice of Forbearance

SERM.
I.

and Forgiveness, by making you equally sensible of the happy Advantage of thus *overcoming Evil with Good*: And to this Part of the Argument I shall add some farther Reasons, to spur you forward, and direct you in the Pursuit of this noble Victory.

First, I shall endeavour to dissuade and deter you from the Practice of Revenge, &c. And to this Purpose let it be considered,

First, That the Passion of Revenge is a Symptom of great Imbecillity and Weakness. For it has been always observ'd, and very truly, by such as have studied Human Nature * that they who are most infirm in Body or Mind, are most apt to be frowardly angry and revengeful. Whoever therefore shew himself to be of this unhappy Disposition discovers in effect his own weak Side; and gives his Enemy the fairest Mark that can be. He betrays himself at least to want the Courage to bear an Injury, and therefore he may easily be thought to want the Power to return one. And this whets an Adversary

* Aristot. Rhet. L. 2. C. 2. Διὸ πάμφοροι, πεινόμενοι, ἐμὴν δὲ ψῶντες, ὅλως ἐπιδυμῶντες, καὶ μὴ ἀπολαύοντες, ἀγγίλοι εἰσι, καὶ ἐνταύροις. Vid. Juvenal, Sat. 13. *Quippe minuti semper, & infirmi est animi, exiguique Voluptas, Ulio.*

Malice, and encourages him to redouble his
flow; where he finds such a quick Sense of
smart, and so little Patience to endure it.
And there is this peculiar Fatality that at-
tends the impatient Thirst of Revenge, That it
helps to defeat itself; and not only throws a
Man off his Guard, and leaves him naked to
any Assault, but often deprives him of the
Benefit of a good Cause, and the best Means
of his own Vindication. Thus, for Example,
if any one, through the Unadvisedness of his
Passion, repels Force with Force, he thereby
debars himself of that easier Redress, and more
valuable Satisfaction, which the Law would
have given him; and is guilty of a Breach of
the Peace as well as the first Aggressor. And
if he who has been wounded by a slanderous
and opprobrious Tongue, must needs attempt
to revenge himself, with the same unlawful
Weapon, both the Revilers (for Revilers they
are both) are plainly upon a Level; and nei-
ther of them can hope to have Right done to
his own Reputation, without submitting to do
as much for the other; which is an Office
that perhaps neither is fond of; and which
the one might easily have been free from, if

SERM.

I.

he could have been content to hold his Peace, whilst he had the other at an Advantage. So that he, who will inconsiderately pursue his Revenge by such Means as an hasty Spirit is wont to dictate, is most manifestly overcome of Evil, even in this Sense; that is, of the Evil of those Injuries, which he has not the Presence of Mind to defend himself from, nor the Firmness to abide, nor the Conduct to procure any suitable Redress for. But,

Secondly, A revengeful Person is overcome of Evil in a much worse Sense than this: Not so much by the Man who is his Enemy, (as * *St. Chrysostom* notes upon the Place) as by the violent Motions of his own rude and raging Passion of Anger. A Passion, that, especially when it is pushed on by the eager Desire of Revenge, is very impetuous and headstrong; and but too apt to hurry one into any Thing that is Evil.

And in Truth the Man, that has once given up the Reins to so masterless a Passion, has tamely parted with the Government of himself, and is no longer a competent Judge of

* *Chrysost.* ad Roman. Hom. 22. ἐκ οὗ ἀνθρώπου, ἀλλ' ὅτι ἐν αἰσχροῖσι καὶ πάσας ἀνελκόμενος τὸ θυμὸν κινεῖται.

what

that is fitting, or decent, or reasonable, or
 awful to be done. So far from it, that he is
 of all Things prone preposterously to imitate
 him whom he most hates, and in those very
 practices too, which he most complains of,
 and with the justest Reason. You shall hear
 him, for Instance, making great Out-cries a-
 gainst the injurious Treatment that he has met
 with from his Neighbour ; and yet he wishes,
 he watches, with the utmost Impatience, for
 an Opportunity to repay him his own with U-
 rry. You shall hear him lamenting the Want
 of Temper and Charity in his Adversary ; and
 to do it with the greater *Pathos*) he shall be
 sure to express himself with all the Uncharita-
 bleness and Bitterness of Spirit imaginable ;
 and his Actions shall prove, upon all Occasions,
 that his Words were meant in too much Ear-
 nest.

And thus the Pretence of his Complaint be-
 comes his own real Sin, and leaves him with-
 out Excuse for it, because he does the very
 same Thing, that he complains of, or some-
 thing as bad, or worse : For the Retaliation
 seldom falls short of the first Injury. His
 Neighbour perhaps has been unjust, or perfid-
 ious,



dious, and therefore he is malicious and unmerciful : His Friend has proved ungrateful, and therefore he is implacable : His Child has proved undutiful, and therefore he will be unnatural. As if the more he were provoked by his Fellow-Creatures, the more he were resolved to provoke God ; or as if the great Need he had to ask Forgiveness at God's Hands, had made him the more obstinate in denying it to his Brethren. So fatal a Tendency has the fixed Habit of Revenge to enslave Men to an ungovernable Passion ; to put them upon very unreasonable Practices ; and to entangle them in many grievous Sins : And therefore such Men may in Seriousness be said to *be overcome of Evil*, in a moral Sense, as being brought under the habitual Power of it. But.

Thirdly, There is still a worse, and more deplorable Sense, (though consequent upon the former) in which a revengeful Spirit is *overcome of Evil* : *Overcome*, that is, *of the Evil One*, who is a perpetual Tempter to all manner of Evil ; and will be sure to improve so fair an Opportunity for it to the very uttermost : For when a Man has once harboured

Rancour

and Conquest gained.

II

SERMON
I.

ancour and Malice in his Heart, and nursed
up to an habitual Desire and Study of Re-
venge, he has so far given Place to the Devil,
that it will be very hard to cast him out a-
gain : Nay, he is actually become so much of
Temper with him, that it can be no easy
Matter, for a Mind so possessed, to discern
between its own proper Motions, and the
Suggestions of that wicked Fiend. But, to
be sure, those Suggestions can hardly fail of a
ready Entertainment and Compliance, that
prompt him to the Execution of his Revenge,
and point him to the nearest Method of ac-
complishing it ; be it never so base or un-
worthy, wicked or detestable. Hence the
common Observation of Witches, and such as
enter into Confederacy with the Devil, that
they are People of a dark, sullen, malicious
Temper, who have so much Will to do Mis-
chief, that they cannot rest till they get their
Power enlarged, in some Proportion to their
Spite ; though it be upon the desperate Stake
of their own precious Souls. Hence is it, that
Murders are so frequently committed, and in
the most insidious and barbarous Manner,
without the least Signs of Horror or Remorse,

in

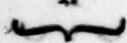
in *Italy*, and all those Countries that are most remarkably addicted to Revenge. Nay, is it not hence too, that the Sense of this crying Sin is so much abated even among us, who are a People rather naturally inclined to Pity, and tender of Blood? For I can ascribe it to nothing else but some *Satanical* Infatuation, with which the God of this World hath blinded Mens Minds, that the imaginary Notion of Honour, or the pusillanimous Fear of passing for a Coward, or the Prevalency of meer Custom should embolden them, in Defiance of all the Laws of God and Man, to fight and murder one another in set Duels; and to play the last Prize for Damnation, with more Unconcernedness, than perhaps would be shewn upon a much better Occasion, even in Defence of their Country and Religion. In the mean time it is but too apparent, how pernicious a Thing it is, to give Scope and Indulgence to a prevailing Habit of Revenge, lest Satan should thereby get an Advantage of us; and we should be so perfectly *overcome of that Evil One*, and subjected to him, as readily to commit any the most horrid Act of Wickedness, rather than leave our malicious Designs uneffected.

And

And now let me appeal to you, what is there that a Man would not do, what is there that a Christian ought not to do, rather than suffer himself to be so fatally overcome of Evil; to have his Weakness perpetually exposed to the Attempts of his Enemies; to become enslaved to a boisterous and unruly Passion; and to be so miserably reduced under the Domination of Sin, and the Tyranny of Satan?

If therefore I could offer any thing, by way of Advice or Direction, that might help to prevent this fatal Overthrow, or rescue Men from the sad Effects of it, I hope I should be heard with Patience. And, amongst many Directions that might be given, I chiefly propose such as follow.

First, It would be very advisable, in order to stifle Revenge in its very Conception, to keep a strict Watch upon the Passion of Anger; especially upon those sudden and violent Eruptions of it, which, if unrestrained, would urge a Man to a hasty Execution, before Reason has had Time to examine, or pass a deliberate Sentence. For what a Man has been surpriz'd into rashly and unreasonably, he is often tempted (such is the Perverseness of Human



man Nature) to defend resolutely and pertinaciously : And the very Sense and Shame of having done what he cannot answer, make him persist in it, and repeat it. So easy is it for him to be overcome of Evil, that once given way to it. But above all Things it ought to be our heedful Care, not to cherish or encourage the Resentments of our Anger ; not to suffer it to rest in our Bosoms, to sleep with us after Sun go down, and to rise with us next Morning ; or to take up its fixed Abode with us, upon any Colour of Right, or Presumption of Reason whatsoever. For, by these Degrees, the sour Passion will soon form itself into a settled Habit of rank mischievous Malice, not easy to be dislodged again. And this is the very Reason of that Caution of our Apostle, — *Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath : neither give Place to the Devil ;* who is so subtle and dextrous at Mischief, that he ought not to have the least Matter given him to work upon. For the smallest Spark, if once blown up by him, is enough to set on fire the whole Course of Nature ; and therefore it ought to be carefully extinguished, e'er it grow and gathers to so dangerous a Flame.

Eph. iv.
26, 27.

Secondly, It will be highly requisite always to have an awful Regard to the Hand of Providence, which is the Supreme Disposer of all things; and not to fasten our Eyes with bitterness upon the immediate Instruments of the Wrongs that we suffer. For they may be Wise, Wicked, Perfidious, Ungrateful, Cruel, or what we please to call them: but God is just and Holy in all his Ways: and whatever we suffer, (as we suffer nothing but by His Appointment or Permission) this we are sure of, that we have most rightfully deserved it, and that His Instruments be what, or who they will. And, in Strictness, we have just as much Reason to grow very angry, and vow our Revenge against the Weapon that hurts us, as against the Person that strikes with it; since both are but Instruments, (though of a different Kind) and both under the Governance and Restraint of Divine Providence. This was the Consideration that supported and composed the Holy *Job's* Spirit, under those great and unexpected Calamities that beset him; and taught him with Equanimity to say, after he was spoiled of his Goods, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the Name of the*

Job i. 21.

16 *The Christian's Overthrow prevented,*

SERM.
I.

the Lord:— And not— Cursed be they Sabeans and Caldeans, that have undone me
This was it that quelled all *David's* impatient and resenting Thoughts, when he was so bitterly reviled, and treated with so much Indignity by *Shimei*: He had those about him, that were ready enough to be the Executioners of his Revenge; but all that he had to say was
So let him curse: for the Lord hath bidden him
Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so?

2 Sam.
xvi. 10, 11.

Thirdly, It will be very proper to consider under any injurious Provocation, that the Person, whom we look upon as a Trespasser against us, is at the same Time a Sinner against God: That the Wound which he gives his own Soul, is more grievous, and, without Repentance, more incurable than any Hurt that he can do us: That he cannot escape, even though we should not pursue him with our Revenge because he is in the Hands of that God to whom *Vengeance, eternal Vengeance* belongeth. And therefore, if God thinks fit to spare and forbear him, why should we be transported beyond all Patience, and presume to take the Matter out of God's Hands into our own

especially, since there is abundantly more Reason to pity him, than to study Revenge upon him; for we can hardly find in our Hearts to wish him more Mischief, than he is industrious to pull down upon his own Head: Nay, and we ought to have some Respect, some Pity for our Selves too; lest, offending God by a bold Usurpation of his Prerogative, we also fall into the same Condemnation.

Fourthly, It will be an excellent Expedient to suppress all Thoughts of Revenge, if we choose to consider the ill Offices that we meet with, not strictly as Injuries, but rather as so many Temptations and Stumbling-blocks, that are cast in our Way, to interrupt the Course of our Virtue. For as, if taken in the former Notion, they are too apt to urge us to precipitancy and Impatience; so, when considered in the Latter, they would serve to make us more sober, and cautious of falling into so obvious a Snare.

For what if another has done me great Injustice, must I therefore part with my Innocence? What if another be envious at me, must I therefore be malicious against him? What if another has loaded me with unjust

SERM.
I.

Censure and Calumny, must I therefore forfeit my Temper and my Charity? Must I injure my self, because I have been injured? Shall I gratify my Enemy, by letting him see, that he has been too hard for my Patience and my Virtue? And shall I offend God, my best Friend, purely on his Account? No! It is certainly of all Things the most * ridiculous, to turn wicked out of a meer Grudge; and to sacrifice my Innocence to one that has cast away his own already. Whenever therefore we find ourselves staggering, and in Danger of being over-borne by the Strength of any such Temptation, let us confirm ourselves by that philosophical Saying of *M. Antoninus* †, that might well become any Christian's Mouth, "Whatsoever any Body may do or say, for my Part, I must take care to be Good: And let the Christian add, "It is my Duty, *Acts xxiv.* "to be sure, as a Christian, to have always *16.* "Conscience void of Offence towards God and "towards Men."

Fifthly, To imprint all these calm Thoughts the deeper upon our Minds, it will be neces-

* — *Ridiculum est enim Odio nocentis, perdere Innocentiam.*

† *L. 7. 15. "Ὁ ὅς ἂν τις ποιῇ ἢ λέγῃ, ἱμὶ δὲ ἀγαθὸν εἶναι.*

Mary frequently to reflect upon the sinful State
 of our own Souls, and the infinite Hazard we
 are in, if God *should be extreme to mark what*
we have done amiss. Let it be remembered
 then, that God is the supreme Judge and A-
 venger of all Unrighteousness; and that He
 standeth before the very Door; that the Time
 is not far off, when He will take exact Cog-
 nizance of all the Actions of Men, in order
 to recompense them *according to their Works,*
and to the Fruit of their Doings. And surely
 the Sense of this common Danger should be
 enough to unite and reconcile us; surely the
 Apprehension of God's terrible Judgment
 should teach us at least not to grudge one a-
 gainst another, lest we be all condemned; and
 not to practise Revenge one upon another, lest
 we all drink deep of Vengeance. O therefore,
 whosoever thou art, be warned in Time;
 Mortal since thou art, let not thine Anger
 be immortal: Let not the last Sun set upon
 thy Wrath: Carry not thy inveterate Malice
 with thee to the Grave——for then it will not
 leave thee there——It will follow thee to

* Aristot. Rhet. L. 2. C. 21. Ἀθάλαστον ὄργην μὴ φύλατ' ἑ-
 αῖος ὦν.

SERM.

I

God's dreadful Tribunal ; where thou and thine Enemy, divided though ye are at present, must appear one Day together : And both, it is to be feared, in equal Confusion ; because both liable to the same heavy Doom, even to *Judgment without Mercy*, for being unrelenting and merciless to each other. Why then shouldst thou so madly pursue Evil, when thou pursuest it to thy own inevitable Death ? Is it possible thou shouldst delight to heap Coals of Fire upon thine own Head, such as are never, never to be quenched ? Is it possible that the devilish Pleasure of thy present Revenge should be so incomparably sweet, that the very Remembrance of it should be enough to conquer the Sense of Pain even in Hell itself ? O no ! That very envious and malicious Temper, even the Devil's own Likeness, which thou chusest to wear now, shall be another Hell within thee hereafter ; when once thou shalt be condemned for the Mischief thou hast done, and deprived of the very Capacity of doing any more ; except it be upon thy self, in gnashing thy Teeth, and gnawing thy Tongue, and cursing the Hour of thy Nativity, and bemoaning the Continuance of thine
Existence,

Existence, and fretting against the God of Heaven, and maligning the Inhabitants of that happy Place to all Eternity.

And now, having dispatched the first Part of my Argument, I proceed

II. To the *Second* Thing proposed, viz. to incite you, if I can, and win you over to the Practice of Christian Forbearance and Forgiveness; nay, and of loving and doing good to your very Enemies, by making you equally sensible of the happy Advantage of thus *Overcoming Evil with Good*. And to this Purpose it is to be considered,

First, That the Man who is meek and merciful, courteous and obliging to his very Enemies, has by that Means so much the Ascendant over them, that without receiving any Impression from them to his own Hurt, he has it almost in his Power to mould them into what he pleases, and to make 'em even such as he would wish to have them.

For indeed, as a froward and revengeful Temper is a shrewd Sign of Pusillanimity and Weakness, so a mild and merciful Disposition naturally betokens Generosity and

SERM.
I

Greatness of Mind. * It is no Piece of Manhood at all to be very angry and fretful ; but Meekness and Gentleness, as it is much more humane and civil, so is it much more manly too, in the Opinion of that princely Philosopher afore-cited. It is a Disposition this, that seems plainly to have the Superiority even in Nature : But when it is improv'd upon virtuous Considerations, and becomes a confirmed Habit in the Mind, it does indeed render a Man eminently superior to his Adversaries, and sets him even above the Reach of Injuries ; above that uneasy Sense of them at least, which makes impatient Spirits so ready to sink under them. Whereas he that accustoms himself sedately to expect Injuries, and resolutely to bear them, still preserving his Temper and his Patience, quite blunts the Edge and breaks the Force of 'em : And all the Attempts that can be made upon him, become just as ineffectual, as beating the soft Air, which is of too yielding a Nature to receive any sensible Mark or Impression from the hardest Blow. So that the patient Man hath this manifest

* M. Antonin. l. ii. 18. ἔχει τὸ θυμῷδας ἀνδρικόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς καὶ ἡμεῖς, ὥσπερ ἀνδρῶνικώτερον, ὥτως καὶ ἀρρενικώτερον.

Advantage, that he cannot be much aggrieved, though he be never so much injured : for, as he is not perfectly insensible of a Wrong, so the Smart that he feels from it is not great; no more than he can easily, and with Evenness endure. And in this Respect he is certainly an Over-match for the most spiteful and malicious Enemy. For Malice can never be at rest, but when it has done Mischief to some Purpose : But, when it spends itself in vain, and finds its utmost Efforts still fruitless and unsuccessful, then it turns upon itself; and preys inwardly; and is a perpetual Torment to the guilty Mind that labours with it. And it is always in the Power of a meek-spirited Man thus to defeat an Enemy. He can be sufficiently (and yet innocently) revenged of him, by pitying his folly, and despising his Fury : He can make his very Eyes force to see so much Goodness in one he hates : He can gall and vex him to the Heart, by a generous Return to an unworthy Provocation : In short, he can confound him quite, by shewing himself to be in all the Contention between them, much the better, and the wiser, and the greater Man of the two ; and indeed as

is a Method of Revenge approved and applauded by the best Moralists, * even not to be like an Enemy, according to *Antoninus*; or to be † good and virtuous one's self, which was *Diogenes* his Direction in the Case: And ‡ *Plutarch* lays it down for a Rule too, if you would vex the Man that hates you heartily indeed, that you must not make it your Business to represent him, as an effeminate and incontinent, a scurrilous or uncivil Fellow; but study rather to approve yourself, as a Man of Virtue and Sobriety, and Truth and Probity, and Humanity and Candour to all whom you converse with. For this would be a silent, but a visible Reproach to him. Every Body would be ready to condemn him for envying and maligning such conspicuous Worth and Innocence; and even he himself (if he has

* M. Anton. l. 6. 6. Ἄριστος τρόπος τῷ ἀμύνεσθαι, τὸ μὴ ἐξομοιεῖσθαι.

† Plutarch, de Aud Poetis. Ἐρωτηθεὶς γὰρ ὅπως ἂν τις ἀμύναιτο τὸν ἐχθρόν· Αὐτὸς, ἔφη, καλὸς καὶ γαδὸς γινόμενος.

‡ Plut. de cap. ex in Util. Ἐι θίλεις ἀνῶν τὸν μισθῶνα, μὴ λαιδέρει κίμαιδον, μὴδὲ μαλακκὸν, μὴδὲ ἀκόλαστον, μὴδὲ βαιμολόχον, μὴδὲ ἀνελύθιμον, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἀνὴρ ἴδιος, καὶ σωφρόνης, καὶ ἀλήθινος, καὶ χρηστοῦ φιλανδρώπως καὶ δικαίως τοῖς ἐνυγχάουσι.

ed, this y Remains of Shame) will go near to be
ap- named, to see his own gross Failings and
ot to imperfections exposed so nakedly to the View,
nus; and upon so disadvantageous a Comparison.

hich Hitherto therefore it appears that Meekness
And d Patience are more than equal for the Com-
o, if et with Malice and Wickedness; and Reason
arti- dily subscribes to the Practicableness and
your expediency of this apostolical Rule of *over-*
inate *mining Evil with Good.*

Fel- But the more the Rule is practised, and the far-
f, as er the Practice of it is extended, the more com-
and ete is the Victory like to be, and the greater
o all e Advantages that will attend it. For, if to see
d be injur'd Person, when insulted by outrageous
Every alice, not only patiently bearing it, but
n for ietly passing by all other Methods of Re-
orth ge beside that of a noble Contempt; I say,
e has such a surprizing Sight as this, could hard-
chuse but fill even him that did the Injury
th seeret Shame and Confusion; what Ope-
s a p- tion may it not be expected to have, when
e fame innocent and injured Person, not
ntented only to forbear and to forgive, pur-
es his very Persecutor with Courtesy and
indness, and endeavours to reduce him by
all

26 *The Christian's Overthrow prevented,*

SERM.
I.

all seasonable good Offices, and by all the Overtures of Reconciliation, and Invitations to Friendship that he can think of. * Such resolved Goodness, sure, must be enough to subdue the most obstinate Ill-nature; or at least, he that can resist † the subtle and insinuating Force of such wonderful Love as this, must have a Heart, one would imagine, made of the hardest Steel or Stone;— he must be a very Monster of Inhumanity. For were there but the least Mixture of Ingenuity or Tenderneſs in his Nature, it could hardly fail of a better Effect; even the same that our Apostle gives us a reasonable Assurance of in the Verse foregoing my Text. *If thine Enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him Drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap Coals of Fire on his Head*— Coals, that when once they come to touch his Heart, will melt him down (be he made of never such stubborn Metal) into easiness

* Senec. de Benef. lib. 7. c. 3. Vincit malos pertinax bonitas.

† Plutarch, de cap. Inim. Util. Τὸν δὲ καὶ πλείους συνπαθεύσαντα, καὶ διηγήσει συλλαβόμενον, καὶ παῖσιν ἰχθῦν καὶ οἰκίοις πράγμασιν ἐν χρεῖα γινομένοις, ὅς τις ἐκ ἀγαπᾶ τῆς ἐνυμνίας, εἰδὼς ἵππων τὴν χρηστότητα, ἐκ αὐτῶν, ἢ σιδάρεα κεχάλευται μέλιτι παροῖα.

and

and Compliance; and refine him from all his unsociable Passions; and fit him for your Familiarity and Friendship.

And he that can thus tame one of the most untractable Passions in human Nature; he that can thus make a Friend of a Foe, does indeed *overcome Evil with Good*: for he conquers him and civilizes him at once; and is in a fair Way to make a thorough Convert, and a good Christian of him into the Bargain. For the Loveliness of that Virtue which has won upon him thus far, and the Prevalency of that Example which has already cured him of the Malice that he bore to a Person who so little deserved it, will be of equal Service, it may be hoped, to convince him in all other Cases, that Hatred and Revenge are upon no Terms to be tolerated in a Christian. Inasmuch as all Christians, as such, are as nearly, and as strictly allied, as are the Members of the same Body; and are therefore obliged, by the virtue of their mutual Sympathy, to put on Bowels of Mercy, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness, and Long-suffering one towards another. And the Treatment of this Kind, which he himself unexpectedly met with,

28 *The Christian's Overthrow prevented,*

SERM.

I.

with, when He was the Trespasser, will (should be presumed) be always sufficient to induce him to shew the same Tenderneſs to those that trespass against him; never forgetting Christ his Saviour, who purchased the full Pardon of all his Sins for him at God's Hand; nor his Christian Brother, who frankly forgave him, and so generously obliged him, when the Case was once his own. A happy Issue this, when so it proves, of an unfortunate Beginning!

And a pleasing Prospect doubtless it must be to the meek, the humble, and the patient Soul, whenever the Enemy approaches, to perceive himself to be placed as it were in an Eminence above him; and that he is still able to keep himself quiet and undisturbed, notwithstanding all the rude Attacks that can be made upon him: Nay to perceive, that, without striking a single Stroke, or saying one Word, he can be most sweetly and innocently revenged, only by continuing firm to his Duty, and unshaken in his Constancy. And it must needs enhance this Pleasure, to conceive probable Hopes of softning the roughest Passions, and vanquishing the sturdiest Opposition

of an Enemy by pure Dint of Courtesy and Kindness; especially when there is ground to hope, that the true Principle of Christian Charity may at the same time be infused into his Breast, and become the gentle Guide of all his future Practice. And is it not matter of just Triumph, that God should give such Power unto meer Men (to Him be the Glory given) of thus overcoming Evil with Good? But,

Secondly, It is farther to be considered, that, though the patient Man should not be so perfectly victorious over his Enemies, or the Victory should not have all the good Effects upon them that might be expected, yet he is still sure to preserve the entire Command of himself; and, if he makes a right Use of the Opportunity that he has in his Hands, he may reap great Benefit as well as Satisfaction from it.

For in the first Place, It is no inconsiderable Instance of Virtue, in Solomon's Account, for a Man to govern himself steadily under Provocations, and to withstand the too natural Instigations to Revenge: *For he that is slow to Anger, says he, is better than the Mighty, and he that ruleth his Spirit than he that taketh a City;* Prov. xvi. 32.

SERM.
I.Prov. xix.
11.

City; because it is the Care and Business of this good Man to restrain those boisterous Passions, which in such warlike Exploits are wont to be let loose, and become the Abettors of Violence and Cruelty. And whereas the one is chiefly effected by brutal Force, or some Art invented to make the Havock of War more dreadful, and less resistible; the other is purely owing to steady Conduct and well-weighed Deliberation. For as the *wise Man* observes again, *The Discretion of a Man deferreth his Anger, and it is his Glory to pass over a Transgression; i. e.* It is the Effect of that prudent Command which he has over himself; and, as such, is truly commendable.

And, as the good Government of a Man's self, and a Mastery over his own Passions, is itself a virtuous Attainment, so it is a Safeguard to his own Virtues, and a great Preservative to his Innocence; especially when he happens to meet a disingenuous Provocation, or some very base and unworthy Treatment. For if in that critical Juncture a Man be not well upon his Guard, he may easily be transported beyond his Temper, and beyond the Bounds of his Duty. Whereas, if he had been used

to keep his Passions under an habitual Curb, and to hold the Reins strict in his Hands, he is at Liberty, when any such Occasion presents itself, to consider it coolly and deliberately: He is at Leisure to strip the Injury of those aggravating Circumstances, in which it usually appears at the first View: And he wants not the Presence of Mind to make the best Advantage of what was meant, it is like, for an ill Turn, but, by dextrous Management, may be improved into a good one.

To make this plainer by Example, perhaps there is nothing almost, that can grate harder upon an ingenuous Spirit, or an innocent Heart, than Obloquy or Calumny that is undeserved; when a Man's Integrity is causelessly brought in Question; when his good Actions are industriously misrepresented; when he is maliciously charged with what he knows nothing of, but only that he is innocent; and when, upon this groundless Accusation, he is exposed to popular Hatred, (if in a publick station) or to the Dislike or Ill-opinion of his nearest Friends and Acquaintance (if in a private Condition):—I say, perhaps there is not a Provocation more uneasy and grievous

32 *The Christian's Overthrow prevented,*

SERM.
I.

to be borne than this. And yet the Man that is provided of the needful Furniture of Christian Patience, and that passive Valour, which a good Conscience only can give one in the Day of Trial, will be enabled to pass even through this severe *Ordeal*, and come off at last honourably and triumphantly. His Innocence is a perpetual Spring of Comfort within him; and therefore he will neither be immoderately cast down, nor provoked, by the Indignities that he suffers. He has too much Firmness and Resolution, and too conscientious a Sense of his Duty, to be driven from it by any Discountenance or Discouragement of others; much less will he meanly desert it, and flinch from it, out of a mere Resentment, and the ill Digestion of the Injuries which he has been forced to swallow. No! He will rather look upon this to be the proper Field to shew his Courage and his Conduct in. And therefore he will muster up the whole Force of his Reason, and call in the Succours of Religion, to sustain this violent Shock of Envy, till the Storm be quite passed over. In the mean while, he will not fail to perform his Duty in all Points with the utmost Exact-

ness

ness and Circumspection; depending upon Time and Providence for a fuller Vindication of himself; and not doubting but the Time will come at last, when Detraction and Slander shall be glad to hold their Tongues, and hide their Heads; or else forced, with much Reluctance, to confess, That that Virtue must needs be genuine, which has been so much exercised, and so severely tried, and still appears, like the Gold out of the Furnace, so much the brighter and the purer. And this is the advantageous Use, the happy Improvement, which he that is as resolutely patient, as he is virtuous and innocent, will make of an Occasion the least promising for good of any other.

And whosoever is endued with any good Measure of Patience, may, if he list, make this, or the like Advantage of the Spite and Ill-will of his Enemy; whether he is accused by him, or not accused; or whether truly, or falsely. If he is accused, and with too much Reason and Truth, he will lay his Hand upon his Heart, and say, My Conscience has told me as much before: How often have I been secretly upbraided in my own Thoughts for this very Thing? And now it comes to my Turn to be more openly re-



proached for it, why should I take it so very
heniously? — even though it be from an E-
nemy: — Or why should I deem him an E-
nemy, whom God hath appointed to be in
the Stead of a Friend, to tax me home with
a Fault, which my Friends perhaps were too
tender of reprovng, or too shy of mention-
ing? However I will extract the Good for my
own Use, and leave the evil Intention, if any
there were, with him that it belongs to: If
he be my Enemy, I am resolved nevertheless to
be the better for him: and if he did mean me
ill, I shall most certainly defeat him: for he
shall never more have Opportunity to cast this
Failing in my Teeth, till I have seriously and
thoroughly repented of it.

On the other Hand, if he be accused with-
out any apparent Reason, or just Ground, he
will comfort himself still in his own Inno-
cence; but yet he will not throw the Accusa-
tion by in Disdain, as being altogether useles
as well as groundless. He will first examine
himself strictly, whether any Action of his has
given Colour to Suspicion, or Handle to Mis-
interpretation: and, though he should find
none such, yet he will think it imports him to

be very cautious for the future. And then he will call himself to Account a second Time for those real Faults, which he is conscious to himself of; and which if his Enemy knew, he would be sure to bring upon the Stage, and expose to publick Notice. These therefore he will take Care to correct and amend in Time, lest, upon some more unwelcome Discovery, they should bring him Shame and Trouble hereafter. And even though his Enemy should have hitherto found no Occasion to accuse him, nor laid hold of any to traduce him, yet the very Apprehension that the Eye of an Enemy (so sharp-sighted to spy what is amiss) is continually upon him, will, in Point of Prudence, oblige him to comport himself with all possible *Decorum*, and carefully to abstain from all Appearance of Evil; that so Malice itself, when most disposed to Mischief, may want even the plausible Ground of a just Exception against him. And from these Instances, as well as others that might be given, it is evident enough, that the meek and patient Christian, who, amidst all Insults and Injuries, still preserves the Command of himself entire, has great Opportunities of exercising

and improving his Virtue; and of dexterously applying that to his own Advantage, which perhaps was mischievously and maliciously levelled against him. And this is the happy Privilege which he always has, and which nobody can take from him, of *overcoming Evil with Good*, and, by the powerful Aid of Divine Grace, even extracting *Good* out of *Evil*.

And now I have said what occurred to my Thoughts concerning this Argument, referring you, in passing, to the Testimony of some of the best Heathen Writers; not for Confirmation's Sake, (for that the Apostle's Authority wholly supersedes) but only to shew, that even natural Reason, when it judges with any Care or Application, very freely gives its Suffrage of Consent and Approbation to one of the most difficult Duties in the whole Christian Religion. And, after having given you the Prospect of so noble a Victory, permit me only to add some few Reasons and Motives, to spur you forward, as well as direct you in the Pursuit of it, and I have done. And,

First, Left, by being unprepared for the Onset, we should unhappily fall short of the Victory, it will be necessary to take the World,

as it is, for a Place that is full of Mischief and Wickedness ; and to consider Virtue and Vice, as ancient Opposites ; and Good and Evil, as perpetual Combatants therein. From whence the true Conclusion will be, That it is a vain Thing for any Man to hope, to steer quiet and unmolested through so rough and dangerous a Sea. And, (to apply some of the Words of a * celebrated Author, himself sufficiently tossed upon these Waves) “ The best Provision “ that Men can make for their Voyage, be- “ sides a lasting Stock of Innocency, and a “ firm Trust in God, that He will never suf- “ fer that Innocency to be utterly oppressed, “ is, an Expectation of the Gusts and Storms “ of Rumour, Detraction, and Envy ; and a “ Resolution not to be over-sensible of all Ca- “ lumnies, Unkindness or Injustice ; but to “ believe, that the best Way of convincing “ Scandals, is, by neglecting them, to appear “ not to deserve them : And, since this is a Purgatory that must be passed thorough, a Conflict that cannot well be avoided in the faithful Discharge of our Duty, That the best

* L. Clarendon, Hist. Vol. 4. p. 299.

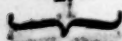
Way of overcoming Evil, is to do Good, and persevere in it; and that this is the Triumph, which the Christian should prefer before all other Trophies. And,

Secondly, This Persuasion once well fixed in the Mind, it will be fit to be remembered, that the injurious Treatment, and malicious Opposition which good Men must expect to meet with in their Passage through the World, is at once, a gallant Exercise for their Virtue, and the proper Test of their Sincerity. For, if it were the Privilege of Virtue to be exempt from Troubles, and the Persons of good Men were to be looked upon as sacred and inviolable under its Protection, this would make it a cheap and easy Thing; and render the Commendation that belongs to it as small as the Difficulty that attends it; and reduce the Proof to little, or nothing of Certainty. But now, when it is the common Lot of the Virtuous to be exposed to many Inconveniences and terrible Conflicts in the Course of their Duty; this enures their Virtue to Discipline and helps to refine and perfect it: And if they are able to sustain the Combat with Courage and persist with Constancy to the End, this

proves

proves beyond a Question, that they are virtuous upon Principle; upon the stable Principle of a sincere Love to God, and a fixed Trust and Affiance in Him. And it is observable, that *Plato* * himself, in order to assay and prove a Virtue that is truly genuine, makes it requisite, that an innocent Person should labour under some heavy Imputation of Guilt; and that, when thus put to the Question concerning his Innocence, he should not grow tender and flinch, for fear of that Infamy with which he is unjustly loaded, but continue steadfast and unmoveable even unto Death. In which it is probable he might have the Example of *Socrates*, the famous Heathen Martyr, (if I may so call him) in his Eye. And if a Heathen could think it requisite or reasonable to submit to so severe a Trial, how much more should the Christian; whose Life, by solemn Vow, is a State of perpetual Warfare; whose Ensign is the Cross; and whose whole Religion in diametrically opposite to the Max-

* L. 2. de R. pub. Μηδὲν ἀδικῶν, δόξαν ἔχει τῆς μεγίστης ἀδικίας, ὅτις ἂν βεβαιωτοῦμαι εἰς δικαιοσύνην τῷ ποτὶ τὴν γυμνάσιον ἐπὶ τῆς ἀποδοξίας; καὶ τὸν οὐκ ἀδικῶν γυμνῶμαι, ἀλλὰ ἥτοι ἀποστρέφεται μίσητι Σαύτου. Vid. Grot. in Matth. v. 12.



ims and Manners, the Policies and Practices of a wicked World?

Thirdly, It may very fitly be urged, as a farther Incitement to us, that in this very Thing, *i. e.* in doing *Good* and suffering *Evil* with Resolution and Courage, and in overcoming the latter by the Power of the former, a Christian ought to distinguish himself above other Men; that in this his Glory and Perfection do chiefly consist; and for this will his Recompence be proportionably enlarged.

Luke vi.
36.

To love those that love us is but a mean Attainment in Comparison; for even *Sinners do the same*. But, to return Love for Hatred, and *Good* for Evil; to be kind and beneficent to the most ill-deserving, this is a most exalted Pitch of Goodness: — * When that which would have tired an ordinary Man's Patience, and baffled his Resolution, is made the Occasion of Victory and Triumph; this is the mighty Power of God; this is the Race whose Goal is Heaven; this is a Spectacle for Angels, says *St. Chrysostom* upon the Place. And our

* Ad Rom. Hom. 22. Ὅταν γὰρ καὶ ἐπώρθε, ὅλα ἤτλη, τὰν τὰ νίκης ποιητικὰ ἀποφανῇ τὸ τοιοῦτον δυνάμει, τὸ τοιοῦτον δὲ τὰ εὐδοκίαν, τὸ τοιοῦτον ἀγγέλλει τὸ δίκαιον.

and Conquest gained.

41

SERM.

I

blest Lord himself made no less, but rather a higher Account of it: For after He had given his particular Command, that we should *love our Enemies, &c.* He adds, to create a pious Emulation in us, *That ye may be the Children of your Father which is in Heaven;*—

Matth. v.

44.
Ver. 45.

Who does Good in Spite of all Provocation, to the most Unthankful and Injurious. This therefore is what He proposes, in order to bring us to the nearest Resemblance with God; and to the highest Degree of Perfection, *even to*

Ver. 48.

be perfect, as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect. And to this He hath given his most em-

phatical Blessing, and a most gracious Promise of transcendent Glory hereafter: *Blessed, says He,*

Ver. 11,
12.

are ye, when Men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of Evil against you falsely for my Sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your Reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.

Which leads me to the Mention of the

Fourth and last Motive which I shall now offer to you, viz. the Example of great and good Men in all Ages; but more especially of our crucified Saviour, and his glorious Company of Apostles: Of Him, *Who did no Sin,*

2 Pet. ii.
22, 23.

neither

SERM.

I.

neither was Guile found in his Mouth : when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously : Of them, who in all Things approved themselves as the Ministers of Christ, and his faithful Followers, by Honour and Dishonour, by evil Report and good Report ; as Deceivers and yet true ; in much Patience, in Afflictions, in Distresses, in Necessities, in Imprisonments, and Deaths for his Name Sake. Wherefore, seeing we also are encompassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin which doth so easily beset us, and run with Patience the Race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith ; who, for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of God. Let us consider Him, that endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself : Let us consider the noble Pattern that he has left us : Consider the happy End of our Faith and Hope, and the glorious Crown of all our Labours and our Sufferings. And, upon all these Invitations, let us prepare to follow the Lamb, whithersoever he hath gone

Hebr. xii.
1, &c.

before

and Conquest gained.

43

SERM.
I.

before us. And, when at any Time we are traduced, or oppressed, wrongfully condemned, or furiously prosecuted, let us call to Mind, that this is the Christian's Trial of Masteries for Heaven; this is the *good Fight* we have to fight; this the *Course* we have to finish; this the happy Opportunity of *overcoming Evil with Good*; this the Way that leads to Conquest and Renown: *That the Trial of our Faith be- ing much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise, and Honour, and Glory at the Appearing of Jesus Christ.* Amen.

1 Pet. i. 7.

A SER-

And when at any Time we are
 seduced or opposed, wrongfully condemned,
 or unjustly persecuted, let us call to Mind
 that this is the Christian's Trial of Afflictions
 in Heaven: this is the great Light we have to
 guide us: this is the Course we have to keep; this
 the happy Opportunity of becoming Holy with
 God: this the Way that leads to Concord
 and Rest: that the Trial of our Faith be
 not such more precious than of Gold that purges
 it, though it be tried with Fire, might be found
 pure and bright, and glory at the Ap-
 pearance of Jesus Christ. Amen. in 17. 1788
 the Race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus
 the Author and Finisher of our Faith, who
 for us was put to death, and raised again
 for us, conquering the Shame, and is set down
 at the Right Hand of God. Let us consider His
 dear Sufferings, His Contradiction of Sinners,
 going himself: Let us consider the noble Pa-
 tern that he has left us: Consider the happy
 End of our Faith and Hope, and the glorious
 Crown of all our Labours and our Sufferings.
 And when all these Things are in your
 Mind, let the Lord be praised for ever.

A
S E R M O N

Preached before the Right Honourable the

Lord Mayor of *London*,

T H E
Court of Aldermen,

A N D T H E
Governours of the several Hospitals of
the C I T Y ;

A T T H E
Parish-Church of St. Sepulchre,

On *Wednesday* in *Easter* Week.

Being one of the Anniversary Spittal Sermons.



Rawlinson Mayor.

*Cur. Spial. tent. die Mercurii post
Meridiem xxvii die Martii, 1706.
Annoq; Regni Reginae Annae An-
glicae, &c. Quinto.*

THIS Court doth desire the Reverend
Dr. M^{rs} to print this Sermon, preach-
ed this *Easter Wednesday* in the Parish-Church
of St. Sepulchre, before the Lord Mayor, Al-
dermen, and Governors of the several Hos-
pitals of this City.

GIBSON

SERMON II.

LUKE XII. 21,

So is he that layeth up Treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.

THE whole Context, taking it up at the fifteenth Verse, runs thus: *And he said unto them, Take heed and beware of Covetousness: for a Man's Life consisteth not in the Abundance of the Things that he possesseth. And he spake a Parable unto them, saying, The Ground of a certain rich Man brought forth plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no Room to bestow my Fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my Barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my Fruits*

SERM.
II.

SERM.
II.

*and my Goods. And I will say to my Soul, Soul, thou hast much Goods laid up for many Years; take thine Ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee: Then whose shall those Things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up Treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God. In which Passage our Saviour's main Design appears to be to lay in a Caution against Covetousness, or Worldliness of Mind; alledging, as a sufficient Reason against it, that a Man depends not, either for his Being or Well-being, upon the Superfluity of his Riches. And, to give Life to this Reason by Example, he proposes, by way of Parable, a very extraordinary Case of a rich Man growing still richer and richer, even to Satiety: insomuch that his very Abundance became a Burden to him; and he was at a Loss how to bestow the huge Mass of Wealth that he had got together. At last he wisely, as he thinks, resolves to enlarge his Barns and Store-houses, and provide himself of all Conveniencies; and upon that Thought he gives his Soul a *Quietus* from all Cares, and promises himself many a fair Year to come*

and all jocund and pleasurable as Heart could wish. In the mean while he made little Reckoning of the Uncertainty of Life ; little did he consider, that (if God had so decreed) he must yield it up before the next Day dawn'd, and leave his much-beloved Wealth to be possessed and enjoyed by another.

And because this is a Thing that may happen at any Time, and for some special Reasons of Providence is but too likely to happen to those that doat immoderately upon the World, our Saviour makes a general Application of it in the Words of the Text : *So is he that layeth up Treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God*, i. e. So, in some Degree, is it like to fare with all those that set their Heart upon Riches, and put their Trust in them ; but take no Care to make that wise Use of them, which would procure a lasting Interest in God's Favour ; which is more precious than whole Heaps of Gold and Rubies. And this is experimentally true : for though the Fate of such worldly-minded Men is not always a sudden and unexpected Death, yet their Hopes, let Things go how they will, vanish still in Disappointment, and end in Misery.

SERM.
II.

I find Ground to raise these two Observations, which shall be the Subject of my following Discourse, viz.

I. That a greedy Desire of Riches, and a fond Reliance upon them, is the most wretched Kind of Folly and Improvidence. And,

II. On the contrary, That the best Enjoyment, and wisest Improvement of our worldly Wealth, is to be rich towards God; that is, so to use and employ what we have, as to recommend ourselves to his Benediction and Favour thereby.

I. My first Observation is, That a greedy Desire of Riches, and a fond Reliance upon them, is the most wretched Kind of Folly and Improvidence. And this we shall find exactly verified in the worldly-minded Man, through every Stage that he passes: Whether we consider him as busied in getting of Wealth; or vainly using it; or summoned unwillingly to leave it; or finally to render Account of it. And,

First, If we consider him whilst he is busied in getting of Wealth, we find him perpetually full of anxious Cares and infinite Trou-

A Spittal Sermon.

51

SERM.
II.

bles, fatigued with constant Labours, entring into various Projects, and following every Pursuit where the Scent of Profit leads; without allowing himself any Rest by Day, hardly any Sleep by Night. And to what Purpose all this? Only to make himself very rich. And why that? Only in order to be still richer. For he knows not how to set Bounds to the darling Passion that he so much indulges. Other Appetites, though very keen and craving, may easily be appeased: Our Hunger with a full Meal; our Thirst with a large Draught: But the Man that hungers and thirsts after Riches cannot take his Fill of them. This Appetite, the more it is fed, the more greedy and voracious it grows; crying out still, Give, Give; and swallowing all like the Grave, but never to be satisfied. So that it may well be said of the hungry Worldling, as *Abigail* did of the Churl her Husband, *Nabal is his Name, and Folly is with him.* For though it is his eager Desire, and whole Study to be very rich, yet he can never find in his Heart to think himself rich enough: He will still be poor in Opinion, and therefore miserable in Reality. So vain is all his Labour, so endless is his Drudgery!

E 2 *quidam lo b* Be-

1 Sam.
xxv. 25.

SERM.
II.1 Tim. vi.
9.

Besides, there is another Snare that lyes full in the Way of him that *will be rich*, and often stops him in his Progress, and disappoints him of his End; upon which his Eye is so earnestly fixed, and his Heart so entirely bent, that he is little scrupulous about the Means, if by any Means he can but hope to compass it.

Deut.
xxviii. 17.

This it is that makes him so apt to betake himself to the wretched Arts of Extortion and Oppression, and all manner of Injustice and Cruelty: This he foolishly imagines to be the shortest Cut to a great Estate, never considering with all his Cunning, that the Curse of God is still hovering over him, and ready to pursue him to his Destruction *in his Basket and in his Store, in the Fruit of his Body, and the Fruit of his Land, in the Encrease of his Kine, and the Flocks of his Sheep, and in all that he sets his Hand unto.* Thus, whilst he is making over-much Haste to be rich, Poverty stealeth after him, and cometh upon him as an armed Man, and strippeth him of all the Booty: He is forced to part with himself, or else to leave it to his Heir, with a heavy Curse entailed along with it. So improvident and preposterous is this wicked Method of growing rich!

Secondly

Secondly, If we take a View of the World-ling whilst he is using the Wealth he is Possessor of, we shall find him still liable to the same Imputation. Whilst he is using his Wealth, did I say? That possibly may be to put the Case more favourably than he deserves. For perhaps he is barely the Possessor of it, or rather the Keeper, or the Watcher over it; perhaps he has not the Heart to use it at all: for this is an unnatural Symptom that frequently attends those who are the most immoderate Lovers of it. Very unnatural sure! For our other Appetites serve to put us in Mind of providing for the Necessities of Nature: The Sense of Hunger and of Cold do naturally prompt us to seek for Food and Raiment. But, in this starveling Disease of the Mind, the Man suffers all the Pain of eager Desire, without applying the proper Relief, even when he has it in his Power. He is insatiably greedy of Money, whose whole Value consists in using, and yet he cannot endure to make use of it when he has it: He shuns Poverty of all Things, and yet he chuses to be poor in the midst of Plenty; which is certainly a most extravagant Folly, or rather a Frenzy, much like that which

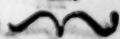
SERM.
II.

People afraid of touching the Water, even when they most passionately thirst after it.

Eccle. vi.
1.

And yet *this is an Evil* (as Solomon says) *that is common among Men : A Man to whom God hath given Riches, Wealth, and Honour, so that he wanteth nothing for his Soul of all that he desireth, yet God giveth him not Power to eat thereof, but a Stranger eateth it : This is Vanity, and it is an evil Disease.*

But, to leave the Miser that loves only to sit brooding over his useless Pelf, let us consider him that runs into the other Extream, and makes a vain and prodigal Use of it; consuming it upon his Lusts, in all manner of licentious and riotous Living; or, at best, gratifying the Senses in a more refined Way of Voluptuousness, with all the Pomp and Splendour of Life, and all the Delicacies of Art and Nature; magnificent Buildings, sumptuous Feastings, Musick and Dancing, and whatever else is most exquisitely delightful in its Kind. Now it must be said of the Man that devotes himself to this kind of Life, and desires to make no other Use of his Time or Money, that he is too improvident and negli-



gent of both : For certainly a good Part of both might be employed to much better Advantage, as will be seen by and by.

In the mean Time, amidst all these agreeable Amusements and Entertainments, some Defilement (more or less) will be contracted; the Affections will be drawn away, the Thoughts too much diverted, that Seriousness and Composedness which Religion requires scattered : and, whilst the outward Senses are continually feasted, the Soul will grow lean, as being utterly bereaved of all spiritual Good, without so much as the Relish of it.

In a Word, whilst there is so much of Paradise (in such Men's Opinion) to be enjoyed upon Earth, the Hope or Desire of Heaven will find but little Place. And sure this must be taxed for the greatest Improvidence that can be, to prosecute a present foolish Pleasure, with the Neglect, nay the Forfeiture of a future, more important, and more durable Interest. As will still be more apparent, if,

Thirdly, We look upon the Man that doats on this World, when he is once summoned to leave it. For then the anxious Pleasure (if it may be called by that Name) of getting

SERM.
II.

{ Wealth, and the frothy Pleasure of spending
 it in Vanities, will both cease. The penuri-
 ous Miser, when once he perceives Death ap-
 proaching, will cast his languishing Eyes about
 him, and soon spy the long-expecting Heir
 ready to seize upon his well-kept Treasure;
 which will give the Wretch a Pain as piercing
 as that of Death itself. Then he will see Rea-
 son to call himself Fool, for defrauding his
 own Soul, and making himself the vilest of
 Slaves, for one that perhaps returns him but
 little Thanks, because he at last unwillingly
 parts with what he can keep no longer, And
 perhaps his hard Heart may begin a little to
 relent too, and to wish that some of that
 hoarded Gold, which must now see the Light
 against his Will, had been before bestowed in
 such Acts of Piety and Mercy, as might have
 brought him in some Comfort in this the Day
 of his Necessity; which he vainly hopes (when
 it is now too late) to redeem by a Tax upon
 his Heir, and some charitable Bequests upon
 his Death-bed.

And for the jolly *Epicure*, the Aspect of
 Death must needs be a very unwelcome Sur-
 prize to him, whose whole Study it had been

A Spittal Sermon.

57

SERM.
II.

to refine upon the Pleasures of Life, without the melancholy Thought of dying. And therefore when he finds he must die, he will be apt to cry out in the Anguish of his Soul, *O Death, how bitter is the Remembrance of thee to the Man that liveth at Rest in his Possessions, that hath nothing to vex him, and that hath Prosperity in all Things!* Especially to one that is in the Strength and Vigour of his Years, and has had the highest Relish of all pleasurable Enjoyments; of which the Remembrance also is now become bitter.

It is indeed said of **Sardanapalus*, a Prince infamous for his Effeminacy, that it was engraven upon his Tomb, *All that's my own, that I have spent in Luxury and Lewdness.* But surely it can be no Cordial to a Christian upon his sick Bed; it must rather be a very unpleasing Reflection at the Approach of Death, for a Man to look back upon his past Life, and find it all lavish'd away in frolicksome Delights, or even the more innocent Sort of Pleasures; and that this is all the Use that he has made of a plentiful Fortune. For however such a Man

* Plut. p. 330. Ταῦτ' ἔχον ὅσων ἡδονῶν καὶ ἡσυχίας.

might

SERM.
II.

might venture to live, he can hardly die in his Senses, without wishing that he had abated of the excessive Riches of his own Apparel, to clothe the Naked; and of the Superfluity of his own costly Dainties, to feed the Hungry; and that he had spared some Time from his Mirth and Revelling, for devout Meditation and religious Retirement. Death cannot but convince him of the deplorable Folly of neglecting these Things in their proper Season: Which must make not only the Reflection grating to him at the present, but the Prospect still more uncomfortable for the future. Which we shall see, if,

Fourthly, We take our last View of the Worldling, when he comes to appear before God's Tribunal, and render an Account of what he has receiv'd. For then the Miser that so carefully hid what was committed to his Trust in a Napkin, and the Prodigal that heedlessly squandered it away in Pursuit of Vanities, will both stand trembling with Guilt and under dreadful Apprehensions of the Wrath so justly denounced against all such by the

James v.
1, 2, 3,
4, 5, 6.

postle St. James: *Go to now, ye rich Men weep and howl for your Miseries that shall come upon you*

A Spittal Sermon.

59

SERM.
II.

upon you. Your Riches are corrupted, and your Garments Moth-eaten : your Gold and Silver is cankered, and the Rust of them shall be a Witness against you, and shall eat your Flesh as it were Fire : Ye have heaped Treasure together for the last Days. Behold, the Hire of the Labourers which have reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by Fraud, crieth : and the Cries of them which have reaped are entered into the Ears of the Lord of Sabbath. Ye have lived in Pleasure on the Earth, and been wanton ; ye have nourished your Hearts as in a Day of Slaughter : Ye have condemned and killed the Just, and he doth not resist you.

Conscious therefore of having received their good Things in their Life-time, and so much abused them, they must expect then to receive evil Things ; they can expect no other but to hear, to their eternal Confusion, the last peremptory Sentence, even of the Judge that would have shewn them Mercy, if there had been Room for it : Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no Meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no Drink ; I was a Stranger, and ye took me

Mat. xxv.
41, &c.

SERM.
II.

*me not in; naked, and ye cloathed me not; Sick
and in Prison, and ye visited me not.*

And all Pleas will then be in vain: for if they should pretend to answer, saying, *Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or a thirst, or a Stranger, or naked, or Sick and in Prison, and did not minister unto thee?* He shall answer them again, and silence them forever, *Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these my Brethren, ye did it not unto me.* And now in the last Result of Things we cannot but be sensible of the wretched Impvidence, and the remediless Folly of all that lay up Treasure for themselves, and are not rich towards God; because we see what their final Doom is like to be.

I come now to make good my second Observation, viz.

II. That on the contrary, the best Enjoyment, and wisest Improvement of our worldly Wealth, is to be rich towards God; or as St. Paul expresses it, to be rich in good Works. Which is the certain Way to recommend ourselves to the Divine Benediction and Favour which is ever attending upon the Man that is so piously, so charitably disposed, under every

A Spittal Sermon.

61

SERM.
II.

Circumstance that we can consider him.

To follow therefore the Track in which we are already, let us consider him,

First, As employing himself in his lawful Vocation, to provide for himself and Family, or to get an Estate; and we shall find that he always looks up to God in the first Place, as the Dispenser of all good Things, and the Disposer of all Men's Fortunes: And therefore he presumes not to be his own Carver, or to seek to better his Condition in any Method that God approves not. He knows himself to be much safer and more likely to prosper in a firm Dependence upon his good Providence, not excluding his own moderate Care, and honest Industry, and frugal Management; which are all of them, in the natural Tendency of Things, very thriving Virtues. And besides, as the properest Expression of his Trust in God, he never fails to put up his humble Prayer, that God would bless his Endeavours in such Manner as may be most expedient for him. And to shew that he entertains no Doubt of the Goodness of Providence, he omits not to *Give* Luke xi. 41.
Alms of such Things as he hath; if he has but little, he does his Diligence gladly to give of that

SERM.
II.

1 Tim. vi.
6.
Heb. xiii.
5.

Prov.
xxviii. 27.
Prov. xix.
17.

that little, resting fully assured that *Godliness with Contentment is great Gain*; and that *his Conversation be without Covetousness, and he remain content with such Things as he hath*. God will not leave him nor forsake him, that *he that giveth to the Poor shall not lack*, that *he that hath Pity on the Poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given shall be paid him again*. It must be granted therefore, that such a Man has the truest Enjoyment of what he possesses, and is in the fairest Way to improve it; whether we consider the Easiness of his Mind and the Clearness of his Conscience, or the Security of his Dependence, and the Interest that he has in God's gracious Promises which is a Treasury that will never fail him. In the mean Time, *Better is a little with the Fear of the Lord, than great Treasure and Trouble therewith*; which is always the plentiful Portion of the ungodly Worldling. Of all which we shall still be farther satisfied, if,

Secondly, We examine the pious and merciful Man, how he behaves himself in the Use of that Wealth with which God hath prospered him: For that will ever be with all Sobriety, and Moderation, and Humility, and

Thank

A Spittal Sermon.

63

SERMON
II.

Thankfulness. He esteems his Riches to be the bountiful Gifts of Heaven, and therefore he makes a religious Scruple of rendring them useles to himself or others; and much more of abusing them to the Dishonour of God, and the defiling of his own Soul. No! He knows they were designed for Instruments of Good, and he thinks himself strictly bound to apply them to their proper Use. He studies and delights to do good with them, and he finds his Pleasure in his Duty: And whatsoever of that Kind *his Hand findeth to do, he doth with all his Might*, and without Delay, lest he should be cramp'd in his Abilities, or miss of the Opportunity afterward. His Benevolence is universal, and glad would he be, if his Liberality could be so too: but he extends as far as it will go, and seeks out the most fit and deserving Objects to place it upon; and contrives, if it may be, to make it doubly beneficial, conducing to the Edification as well as Comfort of those that taste it, and salutary both to their Souls and Bodies. And this is a tribute that he is constantly paying, out of gratitude to this kind Preserver and Benefactor, and in Expectation of his future Blessings.

He

Eccle. ix.
10.

SERM.
II.1 Chro.
xxix. 14.2 Cor. ix.
6.Prov. xi.
18.Prov. iii.
9.

He knows indeed that *All cometh of his Hand, and that he giveth him of his own* : But yet he humbly hopes that God is pleased with such Oblations, because they are of his own Appointment, and the best that we are capable of making ; and because he has declared his Acceptance of them by the encouraging Promises annexed to them : Such as are those ; *He that soweth bountifully shall reap bountifully. He that soweth Righteousness shall have a sure Reward. Honour the Lord with thy Substance ; so shall thy Barns be filled with Plenty, and thy Presses shall burst out with new Wine ; and the like.*

Since therefore such a Man as this has the Pleasure of doing good, which is the most agreeable of all Pleasures ; since he has the Complacency of discharging his Duty faithfully, and acting a grateful Part towards his God, which is the serenest of all Comforts ; since he has such ample Assurance of a Reward commensurate to the Greatness of his Charity, and of the Encrease of Blessings upon his Head, it must be owned that the best Enjoyment, the wisest Improvement of our worldly Wealth, consists in being thus *rich towards God.* And,

Third Vo

Thirdly, So it will be found to do more especially, if we look into the the State of the pious and charitable Soul when he comes to die. For as he was not over-fond of Life, nor any of its Enjoyments, so he will not be exceedingly terrified at the Appearance of Death: As he was not much enamour'd of any Earthly Good, so neither will he be extremely concern'd to part with them All. He will rather see Reason to rejoice, whilst he is discharging the last great Work of Self-Examination, to find himself free from all Gripings and Pangs of Conscience about any unlawful Gains; and from all Doubts and Perplexities concerning a sufficient Restitution: Nay, he will perceive a secret Applause from within, and a sweet Consolation attending it, when upon serious Recollection he finds, that it has been his habitual Practice *to do Good, and to Communicate*; that he has been incessantly employ'd in this *Labour of Love*; that he has liv'd to see the happy Fruits of it in some measure blessing himself; and that he shall leave many living Monuments behind him (and perhaps some more durable than the Life of Man) of his large and extensive Charity. And whilst he is en-

SERM.
II.

tertaining himself with these comfortable Reflections, he may look chearfully beyond the Grave, and safely reckon that he hath made so good a *Friend even of this false Mammon*, as *by Means thereof to procure a Reception into everlasting Habitations*: Like the Merchant that sojourns and trafficks in Foreign Parts, but takes Care by degrees to send his Effects into his own Country, where he intends at last to take up his settled Residence. And this sure must be allow'd to be the truest Enjoyment of Wealth, that affords Comfort when all other Earthly Comforts fail; This (the wisest Improvement of it, that secures an Interest in Heaven. Which will be made good to the Righteous Soul experimentally, when,

Fourthly and Lastly, He comes to appear before God at the last great Audit, to give up his Accounts. For thither will the Testimony of a good Conscience, and the Acclamations and Prayers of the Poor and Needy, the Fatherless and the Widow, accompany him, to be his Vouchers, that he was all along that *Wise and Faithful Servant*, who took Care to give to every one of the *Household their Portion of Meat due Season*, and in full Measure; and his Love

A Spittal Sermon.

67

SERM.
II.

also will vouchsafe to bear him Witness, that
he himself at his coming found him so doing:
And thereupon he will make him Ruler of all
his Goods, and Partaker of his Joy.

And the same shall be the happy Lot of all
those that go and do likewise: They shall all
in their Turns receive the welcome *Eage*, and
hear the Voice of Christ with inconceivable
Transport, saying, *Come ye Blessed of my Fa-*
ther, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from
the Foundation of the World. For I was an
hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirsty,
and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and
ye took me in; Naked, and ye cloathed me; Sick
and in Prison, and ye came unto me. And tho'
these righteous Souls, in an humble Sense of
their own Defects, and the little Value of their
services, should say, Lord, when did we all
do this unto thee? This shall not deprive 'em of
the Reward of a well-intended Charity: For
the King shall answer them with marvellous Con-
fession, saying, *Verily I say unto you, inas-*
much as you have done it to the least of these my
brethren, ye have done it unto me: He will graci-
ously impute, accept, and reward it, as done to
himself. Which is such an Exuberancy of

Matt. xxv]
34, &c.

SERM.
II.

Mercy, that it were enough, one would think, to convince even an earthly Mind of the Excellency of Charity; and of the noble Improvement that he might make of his Wealth by depositing it with God, and exchanging it for the never-fading Joys and Glories of Heaven.

And thus I have endeavour'd briefly to make out what I at first propos'd; more briefly indeed than such a copious Subject ought to have been handled: But as I was loth to make this Solemnity too tedious; so I am resolv'd not to mis-spense your Time, nor abuse your Patience by diverting to any thing that is perfectly foreign and unsuitable to the Occasion.

For what remains therefore, I must take the Liberty (in the Apostle's Name) to charge and most earnestly exhort *you that are rich in this World, that you be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, (which is all but Folly and Improvidence) but in the living God, who gives you all things richly to enjoy.* And, as the fairest Token of your firm Trust in God, and the best Method of improving what you have, *that you do good; that you be rich in good Works ready to distribute; willing to communicate; laying up in Store for your selves a good Foundation*

A Spittal Sermon.

69

SERM.
II.

or Security against the Time to come ; a Bank in Heaven, not of Merit, but of Mercy, which will yield you an Hundred-fold for all that you bestow in Charity.

And this Fund is always open ; and you have the Opportunity of making vast Improvements now before you, as you will soon be convinc'd, if you please to lend your Attention once more whilst I read a true Report, &c.

Here the several Reports were read of the present State of Christ's, St. Bartholomew's, St. Thomas's, Bridewell and Bethlem Hospitals: As also of the newly Erected Corporation for Work-houses in the City and Liberties of London.

You perceive (*Right Honourable and Worshipful*) that the Fund of Charity is still open, and God's Receivers are ready to take your pious contributions, and you have Variety of Objects presenting themselves, all extremely well worthy of your Christian Consideration and compassion.

In the First Place, The Innocence of Childhood and Youth, as yet uncorrupted, pleads

SERM.

II.

hard to be remov'd in time from the Contagion of ill Example; and to be receiv'd into your Schools, and instructed and educated there, and train'd up to Industry and Virtue: that so in their Degree, they may become profitable to the Common-wealth, and capable, in some measure, of recompensing this your well-plac'd Charity, either by their Faithfulness and Diligence in the Quality of menial Servants to you at home, or by their more Publick and Useful Services at Sea; and perhaps at last by grateful Benefactions to the Place of their Education.

Next, Decrepit Age bending under the Weight of its own Infirmities, or worn out by hard Labour, and no longer able to sustain it self, craves some Support, some Comfort at your Hands, only whilst it is creeping lastly to the Grave, to find a Resting-place there.

Then, The Sorrow and Anguish which attends *Chronical* Diseases, and the Pains and Aches of the maim'd and wounded, imploring your charitable Help; that these Evils, grievous enough in themselves, may not thro' Neglect become incurable, nor thro' Poverty insupportable.

Most especially, Those Maims and Wounds

A Spittal Sermon.

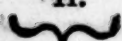
71

SERM.
II.

and other Disasters, which are usually brought from the Wars, as the Marks of the poor Sufferer's Valour, and the Pledges of your own Safety, do justly challenge your tenderest Care and Concern. They challenge it, I say, of strictest Right: For it would be not only uncharitable, but heinously unjust and ungrateful, and even barbarous too, to neglect and desert them in their greatest Need, who have so gallantly defended you with the utmost Peril of their Lives, and the actual Loss of Health or Limbs; That Health, and Those Limbs, which they have freely and even prodigally parted with, as the Ransom of those Estates, which you the mean while, under their *Sauve-garde*, have been securely raising and encreasing.

And, amongst all the rest, you cannot forget those most unhappy Wretches who are depriv'd of the Use of their Reason, thro' the Fumes of blackest Melancholy, or the Heat of raging Madness. Their deplorable Calamities cry aloud for your Commiseration, and the *Physician's* nicest Skill and wisest Conduct; as being incapable of governing themselves, so unmanageable by their Friends, so unfit to be convers'd with, so uncomfortable to be seen indeed by the rest of Mankind.

Lastly,

SERM.
II.

Lastly, Audacious Lewdness that haunts your Streets by Night, and sturdy Idleness that burdens them by Day, do both bespeak and provoke that sort of Charity from you which is proper in their Case, *viz.* due Correction, and a Confinement to constant Labour, which is the readiest way you have to ease your selves of these Publick Nuisances.

You have here (*Beloved*) in this Catalogue various Methods and Opportunities of doing Good presented to your Choice; such as require a very large Stock and liberal Supplies; and are enough to meet with the good Inclinations of every well-disposed Person.

And as wise Men love to lay out their Money to the best Advantage; and good Men would be glad, of all things, to see and be certain of the Success of what they bestow in Charity; so you have all possible Assurance that what you give to any of the Charitable Foundations before referr'd to, is put into honourable Hands, and carefully and wisely apply'd. And the Contributors may have the Satisfaction to see, and be sensible of the happy Fruits of their Charity, and to be themselves immediate Sharers in them,

A Spittal Sermon.

73

SERM.
II.

*Christ's
Hospital,
and Work-
houses,*

Thus when you contribute towards the Education of poor Children, who would otherwise be turned loose into a wicked World, without so much as the Seeds of Virtue, or any seasoning of good Manners, you do, in Effect, contribute to their Well-being both here and hereafter; you promote the Honour of God, and the Interest of Religion; you set the truest Step towards an orderly Reformation: And at the same Time, like wise Oeconomists, you breed up towardly Servants to your own Hands, and such as are likely to prove useful in their Generation; the Benefit of which redounds to the whole Community, and to yourselves in particular, who are such considerable Members of it.

In like manner, when you contribute towards the Relief and Support of Persons that are disabled by Sickness, Age, or Accident, or such as are oppressed with Families too numerous to be maintained with all their painful Labour, you do most effectually encourage Honesty and Industry; which is also advantageous both to yourselves and to the Publick,

Thus again, when you contribute towards the Cure or Maintenance of poor Soldiers and

Sea-

*St. Bartho-
lomew and
St. Tho-
mas Hospi-
tals.*

SERM.
II.

Seamen, who return from fighting your Battels, sick, maim'd or wounded, you invite and animate others to enter chearfully into the Service of their Country; and thereby you establish your own Security.

Bethlem. And so also, when you contribute towards the Recovery of such as are distempered in Mind as well as Body, you do what lies in you to preserve and restore those, who would perfectly be lost to themselves, and to the World; nay who would otherwise certainly annoy others, if not destroy themselves.

Bridewel,
or the
Work-
houses. In fine, when you contribute to those most necessary Hospitals, that are appointed to entertain idle Vagrants and disorderly Livers, to bow their Backs to Discipline and Labour, and to keep them confined for that Purpose, you remove a great deal of Filth and Scandal from your Doors; you secure your selves in some measure from Thieves; and your Sons and Servants from that which is the too common Ban of Youth, the Enticement of shameless Prostitutes; you employ those Hands honestly and usefully, which, if left to themselves, would by one Means or other find the Way into your Pockets; in a Word, you save even these Pro-

fligates

A Spittal Sermon.

75

SERM.
II.

fligates many Times from infamous Deaths; sometimes possibly (by God's extraordinary Grace) from eternal Destruction.

And thus you have seen, upon a Review of all these Particulars, that what is appropriated to such charitable Uses, is Money well bestowed, and well improved; and that the very Duty of Charity is of itself conducive to your temporal Interest.

But these you must look upon (so far as they regard only Temporals) to be but prudential Considerations, and the lower Sort of Motives. You have higher Prospects before you; the true Advantages of Charity are of a nobler Kind: For it entitles you to all the choicest Blessings and Comforts that do either sweeten the Cares of this Life, or crown the Happiness of the next.

O let not these precious Advantages slip out of your Hands: *For in due Season ye shall reap,* Galat. vi. 9. *if ye faint not.* It will be thought no Upbraiding sure to tell you, that there are Abundance of Riches in this great City; and that within these last sixteen Years, even under the Burden of publick Taxes, beside other Obstructions, you have made prodigious Increase, many of

SERM.
II.

of you, in your own private Fortunes. And yet you will listen to me, I hope, if I take upon me to say, that they are still capable of greater and better Improvements: And the Way is plainly chalked out to you in the foregoing Discourse. It is, what I promise myself you will easily be persuaded to, to trust a good Part of your superfluous Treasure there, where you are sure to have the largest Interest, as well as the most undoubted Security. Be *rich towards God*: Dedicate what you can well spare to Piety and Charity: So shall you best ensure the Possession, and sanctify the Enjoyment of all the rest to yourselves: So may you humbly hope that the Providence of God will constantly watch over you for good; and carry out your Ships with Safety, and bring them home again laden with Plenty. But whatever Measure of Prosperity God shall see fit to bless you with, you will be sure to taste his Goodness therewith, and find the sweetest Relish in it: You will have the continual Feast of a good Conscience, to add chearfully to this and all other your Festivals: You will feel a most sensible Pleasure in doing Good, for which God has given you such sufficient Abil-

lities

A Spittal Sermon.

77

SERM.
II.

ilities, and so many Opportunities ; in answer-
ing the Ends of your Creation, and pursuing
the Designs of his Providence ; in being grate-
ful to your best Benefactor, and faithful in the
Discharge of your Stewardships, to him that
is the Lord and Proprietor of the Universe.

You will reap much inward Consolation in
so using this World as not abusing it, nor abusing
yourselves for the Sake of it ; which will pre-
pare you to part with it too, as those that
were never wedded to it, but always preparing
for another. You will have the Satisfaction
of leaving Estates honestly got and well im-
ployed, with an *Entail* of Blessings upon your
Posterity : And the equal Satisfaction of leav-
ing a fragrant Memory and fruitful Example
behind you too, which will cast a Light so
very bright and shining before Men, that it
will discover to them all the Beauties of Cha-
rity, and *provoke them to Love and to good Works*,
and excite them to *glorify God* after so worthy
and excellent a Pattern. To conclude all, when
these Earthly Tabernacles shall fail and moul-
der into Dust, then, then most especially shall
your Hearts be filled and raised with the joy-
ful Expectation of being restored to Life and

1 Cor. vii.
31.

Heb. x.

24.

Im-

SERM.
II.

Immortality, and translated into those blissful
 Mansions, where Faith shall be turned into Vi-
 sion, and Hope swallowed up in Fruition; but
 Charity shall still abide, exercised, exalted, and
 infinitely transported with seeing, enjoying,
 admiring, adoring, and loving that God who is
Love, for ever and ever. Amen.

1 John. iv.
 8.



A SER

A

S E R M O N

Preached before the

House of Commons

A T

St. *Margaret's Westminster,*

On *Thursday, Jan. 30. 1706-7.*

Veneris 31 die Januarii, 1706.

Ordered,

T*HAT the Thanks of this House
be given to Dr. Moss for the ex-
cellent Sermon by him preached before
this House Yesterday at St. Margaret's
Westminster, and that he be desired to
print the same; and that Mr. Freeman
Sir Thomas Hanmer and Mr. Scobell
do acquaint him therewith.*

PAUL JODRELL,

Cl^r Dom' Com



S E R M O N III.



LAMENT. V. 7.

*Our Fathers have sinned, and are not ; and we
have born their Iniquities.*

IN this Book the Prophet sets forth, in a SERM.
III.
mournful Style adapted to his Subject, the
various and sore Calamities with which
the *Jews* were continually pursued, from the
Death of good *Josiah* to the Sacking of *Jeru-*
salem, and the leading both King and Peo-
ple Captives into *Babylon*, in the Times of *Ze-*
chiah : And in this Chapter he addresses him-
self to God in Prayer, with a most pitiful
complaint of all that Insolence, Cruelty, and
barbarity with which they were treated, when
under that heavy Yoke.

VOL. VIII.

G

) And

SERM.
III.

And (excepting that theirs was a foreign Yoke, and not the Tyranny of Rebels at home) the Complaint agrees but in too many Circumstances with the fatal Preparations to this Day's Tragedy, which once made *England* but one whole Field of Blood, and perfect Scene of Horror.

For had not our Father's Reason more than enough to take up the Prophet's Lamentation, and say, *We are Orphans and Fatherless, our Mothers are as Widows. We have drunken our Water for Money, our Wood is sold unto us. Our Necks are under Persecution: We labour and have no Rest. Servants have ruled over us, there is none that doth deliver us out of their Hand. Princes were hanged up by their Hand: The Faces of Elders were not honoured. The Elders have ceased from the Gate: The Joy of our Hearts is ceased. The Crown is fallen from our Head: Wo unto us that we have sinned!*

Ver. 3, 4,
5.

8, 12, 14.

15, 16.

This, you must needs perceive, is no other than the very Image of that wretched Distraction and Confusion, and that lawless Usurpation, which once reigned and raged among us, "When the Estates of this Realm were made Slaves, and (which is the vilest of

ke, (Servitude) Slaves to their own Servants: When the Flower of the Nobility and Gen- try was cut off by cruel War; or executed by more solemn Murder: When there was scarce a House but what was the House of Mourning, or a Family without an Orphan, or a Widow: When honest Men were forced to purchase what was their own at the Hands of the publick Robbers, and pay dear for that Liberty which they were not suffered long to enjoy: And lastly, when our traiterous Rulers were resolved to complete their own Sin and the Nation's Misery at once, by barbarously putting to Death one of the best of Men, and most religious of Princes; and endeavouring to extinguish England's Glory with him, in the utter Abolition of Monarchy and Episcopacy. And then it was that the *Crown fell from our Head*; and *Wo unto us* (might our Fathers well say) that we had *so sinned* as to deserve it." And *wo unto us* also, (may we their sons still say) for *Our Fathers have sinned*, and *we have borne their Iniquities*. For nothing is more visible, than that we, the unhappy Descendents of such Parents, have

SERM.
III.

tasted a good deal of the four Fruits of the
 Wickedness committed in those rebellious
 Times. Many a good Family is now reduced,
 and stript of its ancient Patrimonies; not be-
 ing able long to survive the liberal and loyal
 Expence, or the wild Waste and Havock of
 the Civil War. And many an ungodly Op-
 pressor too is by this Time consumed out of
 the Land; and his Seed, who inherited the
 Curse together with the Spoils, perhaps beg-
 ging their Bread. But without doubt the In-
 fluence of those lewd Principles, that then
 prevailed, doth still affect us; the Contagion of
 the ill Example works even at this Distance.
 And the Effects of that dissolute Licentiousness
 both in Opinion and Practice, which then
 made its Inroad upon us, are now both our
 Sin and our Punishment; and, if not timely
 prevented, may prove our final Ruin. In
 short, though the Nation has been long labour-
 ing under the Guilt of this Day, whether God
 hath as yet accomplished his Anger upon us
 for it, is more than any Mortal can determine
 but to be sure, we have Provocations many
 and great to answer for besides, which without
 a speedy and unfeigned Repentance are enough
 to sink us for ever.

But lest it should be thought, that I design to entertain you only with the most tragical Aggravations of a Crime, which I am verily perswaded needs none, let us consider how far we may be concerned in the Text: For that, you cannot doubt, is deliver'd impartially.

Now the Text directly imports, that the Children may bear the *Iniquities of their Fathers*, i. e. may be punished for, or by Reason of those Iniquities which their Fathers have committed. That it happened so in the Instance now before us, is one Part of the Prophet's Complaint: That it is to be expected when the Sins are of a heinous Nature, the Sanction of the second Commandment may reach us: That it has been severely put in Execution, may seen in the Posterity of *Solomon*, *Jeroboam*, *Ahab* and others, (besides the Example of the Text) that stand recorded in scripture: Nay that it is a kind of *ruled Case* in Providence, all History is Witness.

And certainly, that which is so solemnly threatened by God, that which has been so often inflicted, that of which there are so many ancient Monuments, as well as modern Precedents, may be, and is likely to be drawn into

SERM.
III.

Example again whenever God sees fitting. And for our own particular, if we are not sensible enough that we have already *borne the Iniquities of our Fathers* in the Fact of this Day, let us take Heed that the Burden of them do not grow too grievous to be supported any longer.

That therefore we may all profit by the Doctrine of the Text, and not suffer any farther under the like Discipline, I shall

I. Endeavour to give a clear Account of the Equity of God's Providence in such Kind of Proceedings.

II. I shall shew what is incumbent in point of Duty upon that People, or those Persons who have Reason to apprehend the Case to be their own.

III. And *lastly*, I shall apply the whole to ourselves, and the sorrowful Occasion of this present Assembly; by which, I am afraid, will appear that the Case is too plainly *ours*.

I. I shall endeavour to give a clear Account of the Justice and Equity of God's Providence in such kind of Proceedings; which may be sufficiently justified, as I take it, from these following Considerations.

First, Because the Evils and Sufferings

which

which the Children of wicked Parents lye exposed, are oftentimes no other in Reality than the natural and necessary Effects, or else the legal and just Consequences of their Fathers Sins.

For Instance, the unfortunate Son of a riotous Prodigal often inherits the Poverty and Rags, the Aches and Diseases, which are the cursed Fruits of his Father's Luxury and Lewdness. And this must frequently happen in the natural Course of Things, unless God should always think fit to bless that Family with Barrenness, from whose Vices nothing but Misery can ordinarily be propagated.

Thus again, when unquiet and turbulent Spirits foment Divisions in a Kingdom; and form those Divisions into settled Factions; and at last animate those Factions into open Rebellion, their Children and their Grand-Children are necessarily involv'd in the common Calamity. Though better would it have been for the harmless Youth as yet unexperienced in Mischief, and the tender Babe still hanging at the Mother's Breasts, never once to have seen the Sun, than to be brought thus upon the Stage of Disorder and Confusion; not to act any Part themselves, but only to suffer a Share in those Misfortunes,

A SERMON preached before

of which their Fathers have been the pernicious Instruments. And yet this, as the State of the World is, must be their inevitable Fate. For Nations are made up of young and old, one with another: And it is impossible to sever the little Innocents from their guilty Sires, without the Intervention of a Miracle, or the Deliverance of a sudden Death, to take them from the Evil to come.

Besides, in Cases of this Nature, it is provided by human Laws, and approved by the Wisdom of Nations, that the Punishment of a Traitor should be made more exemplary and terrible, by extending it in some Degree to their Children. And therefore the Publick is not satisfied with the Death of the Offender alone; but his Estate is confiscated, his Honour forfeited, his Blood tainted; and nothing but Reproach and Beggary devolved upon his unconsenting Heirs.

And this must be allowed to be both just and prudent. It is just, because the publick Weal has a reserved Interest in all Men's Honours and Estates, antecedent and superior to their private Right; of which they justly incur a Forfeiture, when they endeavour to subvert that Government which affords them Protec-

tion. It is prudent, because the Tenderness of parental Affection, and a Regard to Posterity, will sometimes give Check to Men that are hardy and enterprizing, when no Consideration of personal Danger to themselves would be sufficient to keep them within Bounds.

Thus far therefore there can be no Colour to impeach Providence of Injustice, barely for permitting the Children to suffer such Evils, as are in Truth but the natural and necessary Product of their Fathers Sins; or perhaps the Penalties that are both wisely and justly allotted to them by human Laws, and are found requisite to the Support of civil Government. I cannot see how the Justice of Providence should be called in Question on this Score; but, I think, the Wisdom and Goodness of it are both eminently seen, in restraining the exorbitant Lusts of Men, both by annexing natural Punishments to some kind of Vices, and by subjecting them to such Consequences, (legal as well as natural) as are most likely to move the Bowels of Parents, and make them fearful of offending, if it be but for the Sake of their Children.

If it be said, that the Providence which makes itself to be observed and revered by vi-

siting

SERM.
III.

sitting the Iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, is not barely permissive, but judicial, and declared so to be in Scripture, it must be granted: But then, taking it in this View, it must also be owned, that what is justifiable in our earthly Governors, is much more so in God, who is the sovereign Lord and Ruler of the Universe.

If therefore the Estate of a Rebel may be justly confiscated, and his Heir divested both of the Possession and the Right, by vertue of an human Law, what Claim can there be against the Decree of Heaven, whenever God sees fit to deprive the Children of those temporal Enjoyments that have been forfeited by their Fathers Disobedience and Ingratitude; and of which he can take the Forfeiture, either in the present, or any succeeding Generation, as may best serve his wise and secret Purposes? For the further clearing of which, let it be considered,

Secondly, That the Punishment that is at any Time transferred upon the Posterity of the Wicked consists only in temporal Evils, such as Losses and Crosses, Distresses and Diseases, Oppressions, Persecutions, Wars, and the like.

Now

Now of all these kind of Evils, which are purely temporal, it must be said at once, that they are not absolute Evils in themselves; nor are they strictly and simply the Punishments of Sin; but, to be sure, they do not amount to a full Retribution for it.

Absolute Evils they are not, because they are applicable to a very good End, and capable of a very good Effect, as manifestly serving to prove and exercise, to confirm and perfect the sincere Christian; and to chastise and awaken, to humble and reform the careless, but not yet desperate Sinner; and to be Examples of Admonition and Caution to all.

Nor are they, strictly speaking, the Punishment of Sin; they are rather of the Nature of Correctives, and Preservatives against it. For it is evident, in the common Course of Things, that the Righteous do, and without the Help of a Miracle, must share them in some Measure with the Wicked. And when they are sent by God's special Direction, and employed upon his Errand, they are still the Instruments of Discipline rather than Vengeance, and savour more of the Compassion of a Father than the Severity of a Judge. In short, they are intended

ed as a Means of much Good to those that will make a right Use of them : And as they have a medicinal Virtue in them, so they are applied with a tender and a very healing Hand.

How then can we presume to question God's Sovereign Right in *visiting the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children*, when the Evils with which he visits them on this Account, are frequently the Lot of the Righteous, as well as the Wicked ; and since, where-ever they fall, the Judgment is always tempered with a sweet Mixture of Mercy ? If they light upon such as are well-disposed, the Chastisement of their Father's Sins will make them more watchful of their own Ways, more zealous in God's Service, and more exemplary in all Virtue : If upon such as are wickedly bent, the Dread and Smart of God's righteous Judgments may still arouse them, before they are given up to an incorrigible Hardness of Heart ; and bring them possibly at last by Terror to Repentance.

Psal. li. 4.

But however it may be, God is still *clear both when he judgeth and is judged*. For when all is done, temporal Judgments are by no Means the adequate Punishment for Sin : For *the Wages of Sin is Death*, saith the Apostle ; and

Rom. vi.
25.

as the Gift of God is eternal Life, so is that Death eternal which is awarded to Sin as its just Wages.

There is therefore a future State of Rewards and Punishments, in which all the present Difficulties will be cleared up, and all seeming Disproportions adjusted in an open Theatre of Men and Angels. And if it should appear at that great Day, that God, for the better Government of the World, and the more effectual Restraint of enormous Sinners, hath sometimes vexed the Children of such Men with sore Adversity, not so much for any great Demerit of their own, as for the crying Provocations of their Fathers; I say, should it so appear, and the Sufferers the mean while, *hearing the Rod and who had appointed it*, should be found to have amended or improved under the Visitation of God's Hand, then will he the merciful Judge not only absolve them, but bestow an unmerited Reward upon them, infinitely outweighing all that they might seem undeservedly to suffer here below. And at this last and great Distribution of equal and impartial Justice, we may assuredly conclude, that God will *render to every Man according to his Works*, i. e. his

SERM.
III.

his own proper Works : No Man shall then be punished for the Sins of another, but *the Soul that sinneth*, that individual Soul *shall die*, because the Award is final, and the Death eternal.

Whoever therefore is spared, or whoever is punished in this World, there can be no want of Equity in such God's Dispensations, as do so apparently abound in Mercy. For as all temporal Evils are convertible to Good, and upon a right Use and Improvement of them, conducive to Mens future Happiness ; so the Damnation of Hell is reserved only for hardened and impenitent Sinners, who shall there bear their own Burden by themselves for ever. And this, I conceive, might suffice to put an End to the whole Question concerning the Justice of Providence in these Cases. But yet it may be fit to be considered,

Thirdly, That the Fact itself, that gives Rise to the Question, may easily be mistaken. For it must not be supposed, as often as God avengeth himself upon the Children for the Sake of their Parents, that he therefore spares the Guilty, and punishes the Innocent in their Stead. No, the guilty Parents are consigned over to the

Day

Day of Judgment, when they shall be fure to pay all the Arrears of that Debt, which they owe to God's incensed Justice. And the Children likewise, whether they tread in the same Steps with their Fathers or no, are still no better than Sinners in God's purer Eyes : and Sins they have to answer for of their own proper Stock, more than enough to justify any temporal Chastisements that God can lay upon them ; because the severest of all temporal Chastisements will always fall far short of the Sinner's strict and certain Due.

But doubtless, after all that has been said, the most general and standing Reason of such God's Proceedings is, because the towardly Children do too often imitate, if not out-do their Father's Sins ; or at least, because they silently approve the same by sharing the unrighteous Gains, or other the unlawful Advantages thence arising : And thus whilst they hug and hide the *accursed Thing*, they justly entitle themselves to a Share in the Curse that goes along with it.

Nothing is more frequent, in common Observation, than for Vice to be hereditary in a family ; being either derived from Constitution,

SERM.
III.

tion, or learnt from Example, or instilled by Education. And it is too much the Care of wicked Parents to season their Children early with such Principles, and enter them well in such Practices, as they best like themselves. Thus the covetous Miser inculcates Thrift upon his Son betimes, and instructs him at any Rate to make haste to be rich : So does the inveterate Republican principle his Son in Licentiousness, and initiate him in all the Mysteries of Rebellion : So also the Heretick in Religion fixes the wrong Biass at first upon the Minds of his Children, and delights to propagate his own perverse Errors. And when it is said in Scripture of *Nadab* the Son of *Jeroboam*, that *he walked in the Way of his Father*, and of *Abaziah* the Son of *Abah*, that *he walked in the Way of his Father and his Mother*, and so of many others, it is a Mark set upon them, that they had been too early led into such evil Courses, and too long accustomed to them, to leave any great Hopes of a Reformation. Nor is the Propagation of Vice confined to single Families alone, but reaches to Neighbourhoods, and whole Communities; and when once it has so spread itself, and taken a fast Rooting,

continued down from one Generation to another, and grows in Time to be the received Custom, and confirmed Law (as it were) of a Country.

In the mean while certain it is, that the longer Vice hath maintained its Succession in a Family, or a Country, the more provoking is their Offence, the more unpardonable their Rebellion against God. And as it well becomes the Righteous God to put a Stop to the Increase of daring Impiety, by all proper Methods; so none can be more proper, none more just, than to *visit the Sins of the Fathers upon the Children*, when they are so apparently Heirs and Successors to their Fathers in Sin, and are daily heaping on fresh Aggravations. And when Things are in this ill State, it seems to be the proper Season too, for God to interpose by some exemplary Act of Justice and Vengeance, that may be a sensible Warning to all Parents, not give their Children so fatal a Legacy, not to leave them the Entail of so sure a Curse. And though, when this happens to the Case, the rebellious Children do deservedly suffer for their own Transgressions, yet are the Iniquities of their Fathers placed also

SERM.
III.

to the Account, and make God's Judgments much the heavier. For the Scripture makes mention of a certain Measure of Iniquity, which when it is filled up, then is the Family or Nation, that is burdened with so much Guilt, ripe for Ruin and Extirpation. And that Generation, upon which the destroying Vengeance lights at last, is said to bear the Punishment of all that went before: For shed all the righteous Blood, that was shed upon the Earth from *Abel* downwards to *Zechariah* the Son of *Barachias*, come upon that Generation of Men, who filled up the Measure of their Fathers by killing the *Prince of Life*. Which desperate Wickedness was remarkably punished by the final Destruction and Dissipation of the whole Polity and People of the *Jews*; and that the Sentence might be sure to extend to all the scattered Remains of their Posterity, it was fixed upon them by that dreadful Imprecation of their cruel Forefathers, *His Blood be on us, and on our Children*.

Matth.
xxvii. 25.

And certainly the Providence of God needs no Justification in this Particular: For he that most signally justifies himself and vindicates his own Honour, when he punishes those Sin-

in the most exemplary and terrible Manner, that have long exercised his Patience from one Generation to another, and could never be cured by any Method of Kindness.

And as it is highly fit as well as just, that the contumacious Children of such ungodly Parents should be made the publick Monuments of Divine Vengeance at last; so the Curse of God does of Right belong to them also, who, though they do not accumulate Sin upon Sin, are still Partakers in their Father's Guilt, because they cannot persuade themselves to part with the sweet Gain thereunto annexed, till they find it as the *Gall of Asps within* Job xx: *their Bowels*, and are forced to vomit it up again. Thus for the most Part it fares with the unfortunate Heirs to ill-gotten Estates; which are observed to melt and waste away insensibly, unaccountably, and rarely last to the fourth Generation. And it is most deservedly their Fate: For if the Acquisition was first made by Extortion, Perjury, or Sacrilege, the Detention is no less than an avowed Act of the same Injustice; and the Difference betwixt the Father and the Son in this Case (as it is briefly decided by the judicious Casuist) is only that

SERM.
III.



Job xx.
29.

of the Thief and the Receiver. And therefore it is most righteously decreed by Providence, that he who is not willing to make a reasonable Restitution to the Injured and Oppressed, should forfeit his unjust Possessions into the Hands of God, the supreme Disposer of Mens Fortunes. And whenever this Decree is put in Execution, every one is able to discern the Cause, and ready to applaud the Justice of it, and say, in the Words of *Zophar*, *This is the Portion of a wicked Man from God, and the Heritage appointed unto him by God.*

And, I hope, by this Time I may have sufficiently accounted for the Equity of God's Proceedings in all Cases of this Nature. And, the Matter being thus rightly stated, there will no Difficulty remain in reconciling the Text with some other Passages of Scripture, that may seem to thwart it. For when it is said, *Ezek. xviii. 20. The Soul that sinneth, it shall die: The Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, neither shall the Father bear the Iniquity of the Son; the Righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon him, and the Wickedness of the Wicked shall be upon him*; this must not be understood in Opposition to the express Sanction of the se-

cond Commandment, back'd by so many Examples occurring in the sacred History. It cannot be thought indeed to stand opposed to unquestionable Fact; it only crosses a confident Conceit of the *Jews* of that Time, who, under this Colour, were willing to lay the whole Load of Blame upon their Ancestors, hoping themselves to pass only for innocent Sufferers on their Account. And to this Purpose they applied that unmannerly Proverb then grown familiar among them, *The Fathers have eaten four Grapes, and the Childrens Teeth are set on Edge*, Ver. 2. But this being a fond Presumption as well as gross Hypocrisy, God checks their Confidence by giving them to understand, that Men generally (if not always in Strictness of Speaking) suffer for their own personal Guilt; that generally speaking too, (though not always) the just Son of a wicked Father *shall not die for the Iniquity of his Father, but shall surely live*; that therefore when the Children are visited for the Sins of their Fathers, the special Reason may well be supposed to be, that they also are guilty of the same Sins, or perhaps of others no less heinous in the Sight of God: Which, if these arrogant People

SERM.
III.

could have been so impartial to themselves, they must have seen to be their own Case.

But if we take the Punishment of another World into this Account, (as it is reasonable we should) that will untie the Knot all at once. For by what Rule soever God may dispence his temporal Judgments, which may be variously suited to the Ends and Uses of his providential Government, this is infallibly sure, that no Man shall suffer finally, no Man shall undergo eternal Punishment but for his own strict Demerit. In that Respect, *the Soul that sinneth, it alone shall die* : And every Sinner shall bear his own Burden.

II. And now it is high time to hasten to the Second Thing propos'd, *viz.* To shew what may be incumbent in Point of Duty upon that People, or those Persons, who have Reason to apprehend the Case of the Text to be their own.

And this will be dispatch'd in a few Words. For there is but one general Remedy for Sin (whether National or Personal) and all the mischievous Consequences thereof; and that is a deep and unfeigned Repentance, manifested by a perpetual Abhorrence of that which is Evil and a firm Adherence to that which is Good.

for the time to come. And when the Guilt of
any great Wickedness hath visibly descended
from Father to Son ; when it has been grow-
ing and encreasing from one Generation to an-
other ; when the Tokens of God's Wrath have
already been upon a Rebellious and Stiff-necked
People, or his Judgments seem still to be ho-
vering over them, then, then is the Time to
repent in good Earnest, lest they be deliver'd up
to the Hardness of an impenitent Heart, and
justly doom'd to perish in the Iniquity of their
Fathers.

And that all they who may happen to be
concern'd, may deal faithfully with themselves,
whenever any such Judgment threatens, or
near alarms them, it will behove them to en-
ter into the strictest Scrutiny with their own
Souls, and examine themselves thoroughly,
whether they have not danc'd to the same Tune
that their Fathers pip'd ; whether they do not
cherish the same evil Principles in their Hearts,
or follow the same evil Practices in their Lives ;
whether they do not openly applaud, or at
least secretly approve them ; or, if nothing else,
whether they do not industriously cover them,
and are content without Scruple to profit by
them.

SERM.
III.

them. For tho' they should be able to clear themselves in every other Particular, yet if they can't acquit themselves of this last Article, they are certainly Sharers in the Guilt as well as the Gain: Because, as was before observ'd, the the Oppression or Sacrilege of the Father is Oppression and Sacrilege in the Son, without a conscionable Restitution.

They therefore that would make an exact and impartial Search into their own Hearts, must look withal into their Deeds and Conveyances, and into the very Beams and Rafters of the House they dwell in, lest some secret Curse should cleave to their Inheritance, and the Worm of Conscience, whilst unheeded, should devour like a Canker. But, to be sure, all they who do not grossly deceive themselves in this serious Work of Self-examination, will always discover ill Deserts enough of their own, (besides the Title they may have to those of their Predecessors) to make them sufficiently apprehensive of God's just Displeasure. From which if they would hope to find a sure Refuge, they ought to humble themselves under his mighty Hand, confessing and lamenting with great Sincerity as well as Bitterness of Soul, their own Sins and



and the Sins of their Fore-fathers ; deprecating
God's Judgments, and imploring his Pardon no
otherwise, than as they are ready to renounce
and forsake both. This is what God expressly
requires of his People, *Levit. xxvi. 40, 41, 42.*
threatning that otherwise they should *pine away*
in their Iniquity, and in the Iniquities of their
Fathers ; but promising upon their Confession,
Humiliation and Acceptance of the Punishment
of their Iniquity, that he would remember the
Land and his Covenant with them.

And it is as reasonable as it is requisite, that
they who have seen the Trespasses of their
Fathers *increasing over their own Heads, and* Ezra ix. 6.
reaching up to the Heavens, should in the most
humble and solemn Manner disclaim all Part-
nership in them, and express their utter De-
testation of them : Which when they neglect
to do, the silent Covering of such flagrant and
notorious Wickedness, if it does not amount
to a direct Approbation, yet it betrays at least
too slight a Sense of it, and too much Indiffe-
rence and Unconcernedness for the Honour of
God's holy Name.

For in Truth it lyes upon all those who are
unhappily entangled with such Relations, if
they

SERM.
III.

they would demonstrate their own Repentance to be more than superficial, and desire to have the Comfort of a clear Conscience; it lies upon them, I say, not only to deplore such their Fathers Sins very heartily, and carefully to decline the fatal Example, but also to make some Reparation (as it were) to God as well as Men by a more abundant Zeal, especially by shewing themselves eminent Patterns of the contrary Virtues. For Instance, if the Father hath been a notable Extortioner or Oppressor, the Son, as conscious that he inherits but the Spoil of Unrighteousness, should think himself obliged, not barely to make Restitution, but also to be *rich in good Works*, and to make the Hearts of the Poor rejoice, and purchase an Interest in their Prayers by his extraordinary Bounty and Liberality. If the Father hath been a Mover of Sedition or Schism, an incendiary or a Rebel, the Son should be the more zealous Promoter of Peace and Unity, and endeavour to give the more signal Proof of his Fidelity and Obedience, by sacrificing his own Ease and Quiet, and (if need be) all his private Interests thereunto. And so in all other Cases of ill Example, if the Children would effectually

effectually redeem the Scandal, and avert the Curse that will otherwise stick close to them, they must not content themselves with the negative Character of being just Harmless, but they must aim to be distinguished by such virtuous and worthy Deeds, as may be so much the more commendable in the Esteem of good Men, and so much the better accepted in the sight of God, the more opposite they are to the wicked Pranks of those that went before them. So may they humbly hope, and so only hope with any Ground of Confidence, that God will *Repent and return and leave a Blessing behind* Joel ii. 14. *him, that they shall not die in the Iniquity of their Fathers, but surely live.*

III. I am come now in the third and last Place to apply what hath been said to ourselves, and the mournful Occasion of the present Assembly; by which, I am afraid, it will appear, that the Case of the Text is too plainly *ours*: For (alas for Shame and Sorrow!) *Our Fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have born their Iniquities.*

That our Fathers have sinned, and that most grievously, in the Matter of *good King Charles*, no Body can well be ignorant, no Body can have the

Front

SERM.
III.

Front to deny, except they be such as are naturally allied in Principle to the Actors in that bloody Tragedy; and, lest they should seem to be altogether unconcerned themselves, are resolved not to dismiss them without a *Plaudite*. And if there be any such shameless Defenders of so wicked Cause, (as it is too notorious some there are) with all humble Submission be it spoken, they deserve another Sort of Castigation than what belongs to my Office. In the mean while certain it is that Rebellion and Murder will and must be Sins, as long as the fifth and sixth Commandments, the thirteenth Chapter to the *Romans* and the second of the first Epistle of St. *Peter* make a Part of canonical Scripture. And I am strongly inclined to think, that if that known Passage in the thirteenth to the *Romans* has been suffered to stand by itself, unincumbered with all strange Glosses; and had it been only considered, when and to whom the Injunction was given, and in what solemn Manner, no Mortal could ever have dreamt that it should infer any Licence, much less imply an Obligation of resisting the supreme Magistrate with Violence and Outrage, and persecuting him even to the Death. One would think too, if that

Text

ext did stand in Need of any Explanation, at the universal Practice of the primitive Christians, the constant Judgment of the ancient Fathers, the express Doctrine of our received Homilies, and the Consent of all the best and most learned Interpreters, should be more likely to lead us into the true Meaning of it, than the perverse Comments of a *Mari-ja* or a *Doleman*, or any other Parasite of the Pope, or Asserter of his exterminating Power over Princes.

But whatever Latitude of Interpretation that Place may be thought to admit or require, it can never be wide enough sure to let in the *great Rebellion*, and the *horrid Murder of King Charles the First*, of ever-blessed and glorious Memory.

No ! that Consequence all good Men and good Subjects will still be ready to disavow; such abominable Crimes will always be left destitute of all reasonable Defence ; they must however be held to be most inexcusable both by the Laws of God and Man. For if we were to admit the darling Supposition, that Resistance is the Subject's Privilege, always in Reserve against a Time of Necessity ; yet no
one

SERM.
III.

one will pretend, that it was designed immediately to be put in Practice, upon every the least Deviation from the most usual Course of Law and Justice : It is only supposed to be reserved as the last Remedy for a desperate Case when nothing else can save the legal Constitution, and the whole Community from Ruin. But it cannot with any Colour of Truth be alledged, that Things were brought to this Extremity when the Rebellion began; or indeed that there was the least Attempt or Design on the King's Part, to subvert the fundamental Laws of the Nation, as was most injuriously laid to his Charge. It is true, his Majesty pressing Occasions, and the Entanglement of his Affairs by the crafty Management of some *Demagogues* in the Senate-House, had put his Ministers upon the Invention and Use of an extraordinary Expedient or two for the Supply of his Necessities; and such, it may be, as were only founded upon some *Dormant Laws* to which the People had been long unwonted. And yet it should be remembred, * that all the *twelve Judges*, when they were consulted in the

* Vid. Life of K. Charles I. Baker, Rushworth, Whitlocke, Clarendon.

amous *Case of Ship-Money*, (against which there was so much Out-cry and Opposition) subscribed their Opinion for its Legality ; and when it came to be solemnly argued in the *Exchequer-Court*, *ten of the twelve*, for ought I can learn, still persisted in the same Opinion. If it be said that they were manifestly wrong and partial in this their Judgment, that indeed is more than I am able to gainsay : But then the more to blame they who were the sworn Interpreters as well as Administrators of the Law, who pressed it, against its true Intention, into the Service of the Prerogative, or to warp it to the Will even of so gracious a King, who would not knowingly have done the least Wrong to the meanest of his Subjects.

They who thus misguided the King in a Point of Law, were justly answerable for the Misapplication of it : But why should the good King pay for it at the Price of his Crown and Dignity ? Why should the whole Kingdom be set in a Flame, that he might be sure to see his Error ? Why should the well-meaning, the good-natur'd People of *England* be spirited up into a Rebellion, and involved in Blood, for pretended Recovery of Rights, which they were

SERM.
III.

were in quiet and full Possession of before ?
 For, to cut off all Apology from the wicked Incendiaries of that Time, it is observable * that before the War commenced, every disputed Right was given up, every Grievance, real or imaginary, healed, by new Laws framed for that Purpose ; all which his Majesty most cheerfully consented to, out of his fatherly Love and Tenderneſs to his People, and with Hopes too of engaging their Affections, at least of ſilencing all their Murmurs and Complaints for ever. So that in Effect the Pretext of Male Adminiſtration was wholly removed, before they came to carve out their own Remedy by the Sword : And yet, had it been otherwise the Sword was no lawful Weapon for Subjects to wield againſt their King. For though the regal Power is limited by Law, and the People's Right ſecured to them by Law, yet it can never be imagined, that there ſhould be any Law to warrant Rebellion and Regicide. So far from it, that, as is declared in the Act that appoints the Obſervation of this Day, *By the undoubted and fundamental Laws of this Kingdom, neither the Peers of this Realm nor the Com*

* Clarendon's Hiſt. l. 3. p. 206, 221.

ions, nor both together in Parliament or out of Par-
liament, nor the People collectively nor representa-
tively, nor any other Persons whatsoever, ever had,
have, hath or ought to have any coercive Power over
the Persons of the Kings of this Realm. Stat. 12.
Car. 2. Ch. xxx. 7. And this Declaration did
not then first obtain the Force of Law, when
that Act was passed, but it is declarative of our
original Constitution, as a learned * Person well
suggested, in this honourable Presence, upon
the last Return of this Anniversary. And this
even they who sounded the Alarm from the
pulpit to the Field, were sensible of at last,
they who were for drawing the Sword, (par-
don but the Inconsistency) were against lifting
up the Ax; and held themselves bound (they tell
us †) in Duty to God, Religion, the King, Par-
liament and Kingdom, to profess before God, An-
gels and Men, that they verily believed the taking
away the Life of the King, in the Way of Trial,
to be contrary to the Word of God, the Princi-
ples of the Protestant (never then stained with the

* Dr. Kennet's Sermon before the Commons, Jan. 30. 1705.

† Vid. The Vindication of the Ministers of the Gospel in and
out London, printed 1648.

least Drop of Blood of a King) and the fundamental Constitution of this Kingdom.

And the Truth is, that Party of wretched and desperately wicked Men, (as the Act aforesaid justly stigmatizes them) who had plotted and contriv'd the Ruin of our excellent Monarchy and Religion, found it necessary, in order to carry on their pernicious and traiterous Designs, to throw down all the Bulwarks and Fences of Law and to subvert the very Being and Constitution of Parliament, that so they might make their Way open to any further Attempts upon the sacred Person himself. And yet, after they had levied an actual War against him, and prosecuted him (and all his loyal Adherents) with all Manner of illegal and outrageous Violence; after they had driven him out of the Field, and hunted him from one Corner of the Kingdom to another, till at last they got him into their Net. I say, after all these Insults and Exorbitances they still thought it expedient * to add to the Mockery of Justice to the Cruelty of Malice, that they might destroy him, with greater Pomp and less Pity, as the King expressed himself, when

* Εἰκὸν Βασιλική. Cap. 28.

he saw they were about to finish their long-
intended Treason: *And to this Purpose*, as the
Act of Parliament sets forth, *They prepared an Ordinance* (the Engine by which they overturn-
ed all Law) *for erecting a prodigious and un-
heard of Tribunal, which they called an High-
Court of Justice for Trial of his Majesty.* And
before this Mock-Court (consisting of the very
Refuse of a House of Commons, though act-
ing in the Name of the whole Commons of
England) he was arraigned, condemned, and
sentenced, as a *Tyrant, Traytor, Murderer, and
Publick Enemy, to be put to Death by severing his
Head from his Body.* Thus a Sovereign Prince,
whom the whole executive Power is lodged
by the known Laws of this Land, and from
whom the Administration of Justice takes its
Life and Force, was sentenced to die the Death
of the greatest Malefactor by his own Rebel-
lous Subjects: And accordingly he was exe-
cuted (as some love to call it) in the Face of
the Sun, upon a Scaffold built up against the
Walls of his own Palace, that no Indignity
might be wanting to vex his righteous Soul,
and add to the Sting of his Misfortunes. And
fell the pious King, ignominiously and scan-
dalously,

SERM.
III.

dalously, if the Sentence of his Judges had any Truth or Weight in it; but, in a true Christian Account, gloriously and even triumphantly. For 'tis a Glory for a Christian to suffer the worst Extremities in the best of Causes: It is the noblest Triumph for a Christian King, to preserve a good Conscience with the Loss of his Crown and Life; and, at his dying Hour, with an invincible Patience and Meekness, humbly copied from the Cross of Christ, to forgive and pray (as did the *Martyr* of the Day) for his unrelenting Murderers. And by this Time, though you wanted not to be convinced of it, you cannot but see and stand amazed at the monstrous Size of that Wickedness, which we are this Day met to confess and lament. For certainly, if all that Ravage and Bloodshed, that Prophanation and Sacrilege, which were the Concomitants of a most ungodly War, be Sins; if the lawless Usurpation, that followed, upon the Liberties, Estates, and Lives (nay and the very Souls too) of Fellow-Citizens and Fellow-Subjects, be Sins; in one Word, if the most unnatural Rebellion that ever was heard of, and the barbarous Murder of a most excellent Prince, who had all the Bowels and

Tenderneſs of a Parent towards his People, be Sins, then have our Fathers ſinned; and ſinned perhaps beyond all Example of former Ages, and it is hoped, beyond the Imitation of all Poſterity.

And as our Fathers were *verily guilty* concerning the common Father of our Country, ſo we that come after them have long groaned under the Burden of their Iniquities, and ſuffered deeply on that very Score. And we have ſuffered in ſuch a Manner, that we may perceive our Punishment (which for the moſt part alſo is our Sin) to bear a manifeſt Relation to the Iniquities of our Fathers, and to be, as it were, the natural Fruit of the old Stock. For as it been our Misfortune, ſince that Time, to live under Princes, who were in the Interests of Popery, or of that Perſuaſion, and from whom we both feared and felt the Attempts of Popery upon our Conſtitution? Thanks to thoſe furious Zealots for this, who, under Preſence of purer Reformation, once demolished this Proteſtant Church, that is the chief Bulwark againſt Popery, and murdered a moſt religious Proteſtant Prince, and drove his Sons into Banishment. And it was their very great

SERM.
III.

be thus exposed abroad, in their green and un-
 experienced Years, when they were least able
 to resist the Impressions of an insinuating Mo-
 ther, and most apt to take a Tincture from
 the Vices or the Religion of a foreign Court,
 that then gave them Harbour. But, I say, the
 Thanks are entirely due to those, who deprive
 ed them of the best of Fathers, and his virtu-
 ous Example and good Instructions; and
 forced them to seek their Refuge where they
 met with a Snare, and to take Part of their
 Education where all possible Art and Industry
 was used to pervert them. Is there now-a-days
 Reason to complain (as sure enough there is)
 of a visible Decay of true Piety, amidst a great
 Diversity of Opinions in Religion, and Modes
 of religious Worship? This too is owing in
 great Measure to those blessed Times, when
 there was no King in our *Israel*, no Unity, no
 Order in our *Jerusalem*; when Enthusiasm had
 almost jostled out all sober Religion and good
 Morality; and brought the Ordinances of God
 into Neglect, if not Contempt; and the cate-
 chizing of Youth, which is the best Means
 of seasoning them with an early and true Sense

Religion

Religion, into Disuse; During which unhappy Interval, the wild Tares of Schism and Heresy grew up so fast, and were so deep rooted in the Minds of a deluded People, that the Soil could never since be cleared of them. Again, Is there a Spirit of Infidelity and Atheism, sprung up to some Height, and daily spreading among us? Is it become almost a Fashion to entertain Doubts concerning the Truth of all Religion, and to treat the Name of it, and its Ministrations too, with as much Levity and Scorn, as if it were discovered to be all a ridiculous Cheat? For this also we are principally indebted to those pious Times, when Religion was made the Watch-word to Rebellion, and a Warrant for Sacrilege and Murder. And what wonder, if the Hypocrisy of those Days, which was but Irreligion in Disguise, hath, in a less demure Age, ventured to pluck off the Mask, and appear like itself, even no better than bare-faced Prophaneness?

But I forbear to multiply even just Complaints. What I have said is sufficient, I hope, to shew, what Kind of Fruit it is that sets our Teeth so much on Edge: And it may give us

SERM.
III.

too much Reason to apprehend, that we have not yet *drunk off all the Dregs of the Cup of God's Fury*. Sure I am that the vast Load of Guilt, which hath been continually encreasing upon us from the first Date of this black Day and upwards, is enough to sink any Nation without a deep, unfeigned, and effectual Repentance. But alas ! where or when shall we find the genuine Tokens of such a Repentance as is in any Degree proportioned to the Greatness of our Crimes ? For the Murder of the King can be reputed for no less than a national Sin ; partly in Regard of the great Numbers that were confederated against him, and the many more that were accessary to the Beginnings of Mischief, who started back at the Progress, and were struck with Astonishment and Horror at the Conclusion of it ; and partly, because it was brought about at last, upon so much Pretence of Law, and with so much Face of Authority, as the tyrannical Powers, then uppermost, could give to it. And therefore the Representatives of the Nation, as soon as Things were reduced, by a most surprising Providence, into their ancient Order, judged it to require a most solemn and general

Repentance. To which End, * *As a lasting Monument of their otherwise inexpressible Detestation and Abhorrency of the villainous and abominable Fact*, they, in their great Wisdom, took Care to have it enacted, that this might for ever be set apart and kept as an Anniversary Day of Fasting and Humiliation, to implore the Mercy of God, that neither the Guilt of that sacred and innocent Blood, nor those other Sins by which God was provoked to deliver up both them and their King into the Hands of cruel and unreasonable Men, might at any Time hereafter be visited upon them or their Posterity. Such was the pious Intent of our Law-givers : And oh! that it had, or even yet might have, its due influence upon our Hearts and Lives. But, I am sorry to say it, there has been so little Aversion shewn to any of those Sins, that might possibly help to bring the Curse of this Day upon our Heads, that we have added greatly to the Heap. And even the Restoration itself, that wonderful and unexpected Mercy, was but ill entertained at first, by an Indulgence in all Manner of Excesses and Immoralities, together with loose Principles, taken up on purpose

* Stat. 12. Car. 2. Ch. 30.

SERM.

III

to cheat the Conscience or keep it easy; both which, I fear, are still retained amongst us with wicked Additions and Improvements.

And I am exceedingly afraid, if the Matters were narrowly looked into, that the very Crime of this Day is not so generally, so thoroughly repented of, as it ought to be. If it be, how comes it to pass, that the very same Maxims and Doctrines, that brought the King from the Prison to the Block, are so publicly avowed and industriously propagated? And what can be the Meaning of that barbarous Feast, that is said (nor can it be gain-said) to be annually kept up, to mock the sad Solemnity of the Day and glory in the execrable Deed? What should it mean too, that, even under the Shelter of the highest Authority, we cannot be permitted to solemnize the Day in Confessions and Devotions, and other the sober Expressions of a just Detestation of the Fact, without being indecently ridicul'd, and scandalously traduced by licentious Tongues and Pens? And what ever it means it at last, that there is so much earnest wishing and urging to have the Day abolish'd. And why abolish'd, I beseech you? Why? Because it only serves to keep up odious Names

and Marks of Distinction, and to perpetuate Heats and Animosities. And, it is true, Rebellion and Murder are odious Names; but when they are horrid Crimes too, that ought to be marked and distinguished, to the End the People may be sufficiently warned against them: And if any can find in their Hearts to conceive or retain any Anger or Animosity against us, for calling (as we usually do upon this Day) fighting against the King Rebellion, and killing him Murder, it is much to be feared that they are still *in the Gall of Bitterness, and the Bond of Iniquity*, Acts viii. 23. And ill would it become the Ministers of God to sooth such People in their Sins, or to suffer them to sleep securely: We should rather esteem ourselves happy, if we could contribute any Thing towards their awakening; but if they will turn deaf Ear to all our Calls to Repentance, and still kick against the Means of Grace, that is their own Fault and none of ours. Howsoever it be, the Day is fit to be solemnly kept, and may be very profitably, both by the Guilty and the Innocent. For the Guilty, if they be not quite hardened in their Impiety, may possibly, by having the Threats of God fre-

quently

SERM.
III.

quently sounded in their Ears, be awakened
 last into some Sense and Dread of his deserved
 Wrath, both for the Sins of their Fore-fathers
 and their own; and these Beginnings may pro-
 bably end in that *godly Sorrow which worketh*
Repentance to Salvation not to be repented of
 2 Cor. vii. 10. And as for the Innocent, those
 I mean, who are not Partakers in the Guilt of
 this Day's Fact, they however ought to be ready
 to join in the devout Observation of it, for
 their own Sake, and for the Sake of other
 Men, and even for the publick Good: For
 their own Sake, that they may be the better
 and the oftner put in Mind, to humble them-
 selves before God for all those other Sins which
 they are conscious of; and that by the Preva-
 lence of their Prayers and Tears, they may
 prevent their own being involved in the com-
 mon Ruin, if peradventure God might other-
 wise be provoked to visit with some national
 Judgment or sweeping Destruction: And for
 the Sake of other Men, who have more Guilt to
 answer for than themselves, that, by their Ex-
 ample, they may stir up them also to a sincere
 Contrition and Humiliation, or by their chari-
 table Intercessions procure a longer Forbearance

or them; and perhaps at last obtain a Dis-
 charge from all further temporal Punishment,
 at least a Mitigation of it, for a whole fin-
 al Land and People. Let us not therefore
 forsake *the assembling ourselves together, as the*
manner of some is, Heb. x. 25. For it is good
 for us all to meet, and humbly to prostrate
 ourselves in the House of God upon this solemn
 day. And may the Day be for ever kept,
 this I speak with all imaginable Deference to
 authority) may it be for ever kept with all re-
 ligious Strictness! May the Memorial of it ne-
 ver cease, the unhappy Occasion never be for-
 gotten! For to what Purpose should it, unless
 could be blotted not only out of our Calen-
 dar, but out of our *English Annals*, and all o-
 ther Histories; and pass at once into perpetual
 silence and Oblivion among Men? And yet
 all this were practicable (as it is not) it
 would avail nothing, unless it could be blotted
 out of God's Book, never more to be remem-
 bered against us, or any that shall come after
 us, either in this World or that which is to
 come. But this, we know, is only to be done
 by the unfeigned Tears of penitential Sorrow,
 sanctified by the all-atoning Blood of Christ.

Let

SERM.

III.

Let us therefore bethink ourselves at last
 bringing forth Fruit meet for Repentance
 and, with that unalterable Resolution, let us
 deprecate God's Wrath, and say in all Humi-
 lity, *Remember not, Lord, our Offences, nor the*
Offences of our Fore-fathers; and when thou
makest Inquisition for Blood, lay not the Guilt
that Royal and Innocent Blood, which nothing but
the Blood of thy Son can expiate, lay it not
the Charge of the People of this Land, nor let
it ever be required of us, or our Posterity
 Amen.



*The providential Division of Men into
Rich and Poor, and the respective
Duties thence arising, briefly consi-
dered,*

I N A

S E R M O N

Preached in the Parish Church of

St. *SEPULCHRE'S*,

MAY 27. 1708.

1708

at the Church of St. Sepulchres

on the 27th of May 1708

by the Rev. Mr. John Tillotson

Provincial Bishop of the

Rich and Poor, and the

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SERMON IV.

The Providential Division of Men into *Rich* and *Poor*, and the respective Duties thence arising, briefly consider'd.



PROV. XXII. 2.

The Rich and Poor meet together ; the Lord is the Maker of them all.

THE obvious Meaning of this proverbial Speech is, that *the Rich and Poor* are mingled, or rather associated together as Members of the same Community ; under very different Circumstances indeed, as to their outward Appearance and Condition ; but with a manifest Equality as to their Na-

SERM.
IV.



SERM.
IV.Ecclesiast
xxxiii. 10

ture and Origin: For *the Lord is the Maker of them all. All Men are from the Ground, and Adam was created of Earth: in much Knowledge the Lord hath divided them, and made their ways diverse.* The same God is both the Author of their Being, and the Disposer of their Fortunes. As he maketh them *Men*, so he also maketh *Poor*, and maketh *Rich*, he bringeth low, and lifteth up; the one is the Effect of his creating Power, the other the Allotment of his governing Providence. For, according to the Psalmist's Calculation, (who was wiser in this point than any Astrologer) *Promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South;* 'It depends not upon the Position of the Heavens, nor the Influence of the Stars, nor any such imaginary Cause: *But God is the Judge, he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

Psal. lxxv.
6, 7.

This I take to be the true Purport of the Doctrine contain'd in the Text, which is too plain to stand in need of farther Proof or Illustration.

My Business shall be

First. To raise some general Observations

the Rich and Poor consider'd.

131

from hence, conducing to Christian Knowledge
and Practice.

SERM.
IV.

Secondly, To point in particular at the re-
spective Duty both of the *Rich and Poor* : First
towards God as their common Creator ; then
toward each other as Fellow-Creatures.

Thirdly, To make an Application pertinent
to the present Occasion of our *meeting together*
in the House of God.

The Rich and Poor meet together : the Lord
is the Maker of them all.

I. And the first thing I would observe from
hence is, that, as God is the *Maker* of all Men,
High and Low, Rich and Poor, one with another, P^{sal.} xlix.
so it is to be suppos'd, that he hath made Pro-
vision sufficient for the Happiness of them *All*.^{2.}

The very Notion of God as a Creator makes
this Supposition clear and incontestable. For,
as God is in Nature infinitely Good, so there is
nothing, that we can conceive, could determine
him to create this World, and people it with
Mankind, but the free Motions of his own
communicative Goodness. This is so discern-
able by the meer Light of Reason, that the * Phi-

* Quæris quid sit propositum Deo ? Bonitas. Ita certe Plato ait.
Quæ Deo faciendi Mundum causa fuit ? Bonus est, bono nulla
unquam boni invidia est. Seneca. Ep. 65.

SERM.
IV.

losophers, when they are upon the Enquiry what should be the impulsive Cause or Reason of God's making the World, without Hesitation, solve the Problem by DIVINE GOODNESS.

And if Goodness was the pure Motive, that induc'd God to communicate Existence to Mankind, to furnish them with the Necessary and Conveniences of this Life, and to endow them with noble Faculties, that seem to look beyond this Life, and make them capable of higher Enjoyments; then may we certainly conclude, that the good God design'd the general Good and Happiness of these his Creatures in creating and arranging them as he did; and that he provided *sufficiently* for the Good and Happiness of them *All*, because the Design was conducted by infinite Wisdom as well as Goodness.

And whatever Diversity may appear in Mens outward Circumstances, how unequal soever the Distribution of God's common Gifts may seem, we must still conclude, that there is a competent Provision made for the Happiness of *All*, because God cannot be suspected of Partiality to *Any*:—*He regardeth not the Rich more than the Poor; for they are All the Work of his Hands*

Job xxxiv.
19.

Hands

Hands. And it can never be imagin'd, that he should make any of them on purpose to be miserable, or for any other End indeed than to be happy. Far be it from us, O Lord, to entertain any such harsh or impious Thought of thee! *For thou lovest all the things that are, and abhorrest nothing which thou hast made: for never wouldest thou have made any thing, if thou hadst hated it; as we have it very appositely express'd in the Book of Wisdom, chap. II. v. 24.*

And this is the first Observation I thought proper to make from the Text, to lay the better Foundation for that Reverence, Submission, and Thankfulness, which is universally due to our Beneficent Creator.

II. It is to be observ'd farther, that, tho' God must be suppos'd to have provided sufficiently for the Happiness of all Men, as he is the Maker of them *All*, yet are there wise and good Reasons notwithstanding for the promiscuous Dispensation of Good and Evil in this World: Nor is it to be expected that all should be happy, or any compleatly happy here.

It is apparent in Fact, if we look into all the Ecclesiastic Works of the most High, that there are two and xxxiii. 15. of his two, one against another: the Rich against the

~ ~ ~ Poor, and Prosperity against Adversity. ~ ~ ~
 ~ ~ ~ And we must acknowledge Things to be well
 and wisely thus order'd, both upon a natural
 and a moral Account.

Upon a natural Account first, because there
 could be no Government without Subordination.
 And if, by the Disposition of Providence, all
 Men had been made as equal in Fortune and
 Condition, as they are in Nature, it would have
 been an eternal Dispute, who should obey and
 who should govern: And it had been hardly
 possible to bring things, upon such a *Base*,
 to any tolerable Order, or perfect Settlement.
 Whereas that Disparity of Circumstances be-
 twixt Man and Man, which God in Wisdom
 hath appointed, serves to induce such as are
 mean and needy willingly to resign the Power
 to them who already enjoy the Advantages of
 Birth and Fortune: And it is no less an In-
 ducement to the Wealthy and Honourable to
 cherish and protect the Poor, without the Affis-
 tance of whose Hands, the most plentiful Con-
 dition would be so far from being happy or
 easie, that perhaps it would be the most anxious,
 and the most laborious. And God's provident
 Care is very remarkable in making the Rich

and



and Poor thus mutually needful and helpful to each other; that so they might be link'd together by the strongest Ties of Interest, and both sufficiently encouraged to act agreeably to the Station in which God hath placed them.

And this appears to be a very wise and good Administration likewise upon a moral Account, because that Variety of Conditions which is allotted to Men in the changeable Scene of this transitory World, affords Room for the Trial and Improvement of various Virtues, which suit, some with one State of Life, and some with another. For Example, Poverty is the proper State to try Mens Faith, Patience, and Resignation: And Plenty, to exercise their Humility, Charity, and Moderation: And the Changes and Chances by which they are frequently tossed from one Condition to the other, help to prove their Constancy and Firmness, to enlarge their Experience, and to convince them of the Emptiness and Vanity of all sublu-
nary Things.

For in Truth, when all is done, though we cannot suppose God's Creation to be so defective, as that any Thing should be wanting to make Men happy, yet neither can we be so

SERM.
IV.

fond as to imagine that Man's true Happiness should consist in the Affluence or Abundance of any Thing that this Earth can furnish.

Were it so, we should not see one Man rolling in Ease and Plenty, whilst another sweats hard to live, or groans under pinching Necessity. No! we may depend upon it, all these Things would be distributed with an even Hand, and in the exactest Proportion, if they were indeed essential to our Happiness: Or rather, the virtuous and godly Man would be sure always to enjoy the most and the choicest of all temporal Blessings; the Justice of a God that is the *Father of Mercies* would in no wise suffer him to pass undistinguished:

2 Cor. i. 3.

Ecclesiast.
ix. 2.

But since it is notorious that Things are quite otherwise disposed; that *all Things* indeed *come alike to all*, and that *there is one Event to the righteous and to the wicked*; and that so it must be without a constant Interposition of Miracles; we must of Necessity be convinced, that the Happiness which is properly *Human* is not here to be expected: Because no Man can be certain of possessing and enjoying that fancied Happiness which this World affords, nor can the best of Men promise himself

brought

to

to be completely happy in a World, where the Good and Evil are so chequer'd each with other, that every Move a Man makes may produce a considerable Change in his Condition.

And this was an Observation useful to be made from the Text, partly to vindicate the Wisdom of Divine Providence, and partly to teach us the true Value of these earthly Things, and to put us upon seeking for something more solid and durable. For,

III. It must be observed yet farther, that, since God hath undoubtedly made a sufficient provision for the Happiness of *all* Men, and yet it does not appear that there is any such suitable Provision made for them in this World, must unavoidably follow, that there will be a future State of just Recompence and complete happiness.

For if this Life were to set the Bounds to our Expectations, and to put an End to every Being, it would be a sore Evil indeed, and the most remediless of all Things that are seen under the Sun, that the Good and Bad should be so unequally involv'd in one Event; that the one (as it often happens) should suffer deservedly even for being good, and the other flourish

SERM.
IV.

flourish and triumph in his very Wickedness. This were a Management upon no Terms to be reconciled with the Justice, Wisdom, and Goodness of that God who is the Maker and Governor of the World. But since we cannot entertain the least Doubt, but that these Perfections essential to the Godhead, and always in Harmony with each other, we may as infallibly conclude, that there is to be a State of exact and adequate Retribution hereafter.

And though this be a Conclusion that hath all the Certainty and Clearness that Reason could give it, yet lest Men, *because of the Blindness of their Heart*, should be in Danger of losing the comfortable Sight of it, God hath expressly declared, that we have a better and an enduring Substance, a great Recompence Reward, an Inheritance incorruptible and unfaded, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us.

Heb. x.
34. 35.
1 Pet. i. 4.

And this once mention'd, all the Difficulties are perfectly clear'd up concerning the profuse Distribution of Good and Evil in the World. For since here we have no continuing City, but seek for one to come, which hath Foundations, and whose Builder and Maker is God,

Heb. xiii.
14. & xi.
10.

matters not much what our present Condition
is: For there are Mansions for the Poor as well
as for the Rich in Heaven, and the Way thither
is equally open to them both; and during their
passage through this mortal Life, they are both
upon their Probation, though in a Method
somewhat different. And if they take care so
to behave themselves, as becomes that Depen-
dence which they have upon God, and that Re-
surrection which they bear one to another, accor-
ding as God hath rang'd and order'd them, they
may meet together in Heaven at last, and be
jointly possess'd of the Riches of that glorious
Place, and the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*.

And this was an Observation needful to be
taken along with us, in order to give a right
determination to our Thoughts and Affections,
and, by presenting us with a true Prospect both
of our present and our future State, to teach
and enable us so to pass through Things tem-
poral, as that finally we lose not the Things
eternal.

II. I proceed now to point more particularly
the respective Duty both of the Poor and
the Rich: First towards God as their common
Creator; and then towards each other as Fel-
low-Creatures.

1. And

SERM.
IV.

I. And first towards God as the Creator and Governor of all Things, it is the respective Duty of the *Poor*, quietly and patiently to acquiesce in the sovereign Disposals of his good Providence.

Enchirid.
Cap. 23.

And this is a Duty plainly dictated by natural Reason. For *Epicletus* an Heathen can tell us, "That we are but Actors of a certain Part which the Master and Director of the *Drama* hath assigned us; and that it belongs to us to act that Part well and handsomely that falls to our Lot, even though it be that of a Beggar, since the Choice is not in our Selves, but in Another."

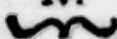
But the Scripture carries the Point higher and resolves that sovereign Dominion which God exerciseth over us, into the original Right of Creation, which ought not once to be disputed or murmured against by any Creature. For *Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker* (saith the Prophet *Isai*. xlv. 9.) *Let the Potsherds strive with the Potsherds of the Earth: Shall the Clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou? And, if the Potter hath such Power over the Clay, much more must the Power of God be allowed to be most absolute*

and his Judgment most certain and unerring, both in framing his Creatures, and carving out their Fortunes for them.

And therefore the poorest and the meanest Mortal that is, is bound, with all humble Submission, to rest contented with that State or Condition in which it hath pleased God to rank him; always remembering, that he is in the Hands of a faithful Creator, who, though he hath made him, in the Eye of the World, but poor and little, yet can and will notwithstanding (if it be not his own Fault) make him truly happy and glorious.

2. Another special Duty incumbent upon the Poor, with respect to their Lord and Maker, is a regular and religious Behaviour in that Station which God hath allotted to them. For Poverty is far from being any Hindrance to Virtue: It rather helps to awaken Consideration, to cure Mens Fondness for the World, and create a sort of Indifference towards it; and this naturally makes way for serious Thoughts, and raises the Affections towards better and higher Things.

And certainly it lyes upon all such as are in these Circumstances, thankfully to comply with

SERM.
IV.Luke x.
42.Rom. x.
12.

with the gracious Designs of Providence : and since they are not cumbred with the Cares of Life, (except only for mere Necessaries) not much acquainted with its deceitful Pleasures it behoves them to chuse that *good Part* which shall not be taken away from them, and to attend diligently upon the *one Thing needful*, the important Business of Religion, and the Welfare of their immortal Souls ; and, as knowing that *the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him*, they should endeavour to treasure up Favour with him, and *lay up in store for themselves a good Foundation against the Time to come* that so, how scanty soever these perishing Things at present be, or how soon soever they may fail, *They may at length lay hold on eternal Life*.

3. Another special Duty that the Poor owe to their Lord and Maker, is a firm Trust and Affiance in him. For the Straitness of the present Condition is no Argument that they are deserted or neglected of God ; since he is nevertheless able to provide, and indeed has effectually provided for that which is their true and only Happiness. Nay, he hath declared himself to be their Patron and Protector ever

in this World; and therefore of all Things they ought not to cast away their Confidence in God, because they are destitute of other Helps. But they ought so much the rather to cast their whole Care upon him, and in every Thing by Prayer and Supplication with Thanksgiving to make their Requests known unto him; not doubting but that He providently careth for them, and will either actually relieve their Wants and Miseries, or else make these appearing Evils to work together for their real Good, and minister to the Increase of their Joy and Glory in the World to come.

Philip. iv.
6.

And now, on the other Hand, I must take leave to give the *Rich* a few Hints of that Duty which they also owe to their sovereign Lord and Maker.

1. One great Branch of which consists in an humble Acknowledgment, that He is the sole Arbitrer and Disposer of their Fortunes; that their Riches are the Gifts of his Providence; and that they have nothing but what they have received. This is what they ought to make themselves thoroughly sensible of, the better to testify their Thankfulness to God, the Fountain of all Good, and to avoid those Snares to which

SERM.
IV.

Hab. i. 16.

which their Condition lies most exposed. That they may not be so vain as to *sacrifice to their own Net*, and attribute their Prosperity to their own Industry, Contrivance, or Management: That they may not be apt to turn wanton, and forgetful of God, which is a Disease that the Surfeit of Plenty too often breeds: That they may not grow fondly enamoured of the Gift, to the Dishonour of the Giver; and idolize the fine Gold, by setting their Heart upon it, and putting their Trust in it. All which are dangerous Temptations with which *the God of this World* will be endeavouring to *blind their Minds*, unless they keep up a constant Sense of this very Thing in their Thoughts, that it is *the living God* that *giveth them all Things richly to enjoy*; that it is his *Blessing* that *maketh truly Rich*; and that without it Riches alone can yield no Enjoyment, no Contentment.

1 Tim. v.
16.

2. Another Instance of Duty that the Rich owe to him who made them what they are, is to be exemplary in their Obedience to his most holy Laws. For all the Wealth in the *Indies* can never purchase any Indulgence for other Sin at God's Hand. And therefore the Rich must

must not presume to think, that they are Men privileged, and set free from the Fetters of Religion; that they are not tied up by the Rules of Temperance and Chastity; that they are not obliged by the Law of Christian Meekness and Forgiveness; that they are not bound to attend God's solemn Worship, and to reverence his Sabbath and his Sanctuary. For to allow themselves in such Thoughts, or to govern their Practice by such corrupt Maxims as these, would be a most insufferable Affront to the Majesty of their great Creator, as well as abominable Ingratitude to their bountiful Benefactor. Whereas they indeed, of all Men, are under the greatest Obligation to be virtuous and religious, because they stand indebted for the largest Receipts unto God. And this Obligation is so much the stricter upon them, because the Figure that they make, and the Sway that they bear in the World, adds a sort of Authority to their Example; and they should study to be very exact in their Behaviour and very exemplary in all Virtue, lest, by living licentiously themselves, they should set Fashions in Vice, as they do in other Things, and draw the Multitude after them, who are always prone to imitate, especially that which is Evil.

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SERM.
IV.

3. Another peculiar Head of Duty that is owing from the *Rich* to their liberal Creator, is what *Solomon* very significantly calls *honouring the Lord with their Substance*, by dedicating some Part of it to pious and charitable Uses that is in Truth, by giving unto Him of his own, as the Rivers flow into the Sea from whence they sprung.

Prov. iii.
9.

And without all Question, they who have tasted so largely of God's unenvied Bounty, should hold themselves more particularly obliged to pay their Tithes and Oblations punctually; (in which God hath an immediate Propriety, as being the settled Maintenance of his Ministers) and to contribute, upon Occasion, what may be farther needful towards the more honourable Support of the Ministry, and the more decent Performance of divine Worship: They should hold themselves obliged to be ready, to their Power, to help forward all good and useful Work, and to *devise liberal Things*, especially for the Advancement of true Religion and Virtue, and the Encouragement of Industry and Honesty among the poor Sort, whom God hath in a Manner substituted to be his Receivers.

And therefore, since the Goodness of Man extendeth not unto God, since it is impossible to be in a proper Sense beneficial to our Maker, they, whom he hath blessed with Abundance, should esteem it their Privilege as well as Duty to lay hold on the Opportunity of making him their Debtor, by chearfully lending unto him in the Person of the Poor, and bestowing some Portion of his Gifts as he himself hath appointed. But this Part of their Duty will present itself again under another View, whilst I am considering the reciprocal Duty of *Rich* and *Poor*, one towards another as Fellow-Creatures: Which I shall now do in very brief Hints, as not unregardful of your Patience.

I. And first for the *Poor*, one main part of their relative Duty towards the *Rich*, is a modest Deference and humble Deportment, as towards those whom the Almighty Providence hath placed in a superior Station. For since it is God's own Appointment, that some should be Rich and some Poor, some High and some Low, that so, by a due Subordination, Government might be the better maintain'd, and the Ends of Society answer'd, no doubt this

SERM.
IV.

infers an Obligation upon those of inferior Degree, to keep their Rank, and observe *Decorum* in it; and not to look up with an evil and envious Eye upon those who are plac'd above them; much less to behave themselves rudely and disrespectfully towards them, or to turn refractory and contumacious, because such disorderly Behaviour would be an Act of Disobedience against God, and a Resistance of his Ordinance.

2. Another necessary Piece of Duty that the *Poor* are bound to pay to the *Rich*, is Honesty and Diligence in their Vocation and Business. For since it hath not seem'd good to their Master to bestow much Plenty upon them, they ought to be content with his Allowance, and not to accept it upon the Terms that he has given them, even the Sweat of their own Brow. They must not dare to set up for their own Carvers, by filching and stealing, or any base or dishonest way of Livelihood; they must not give themselves up to Idleness, nor take to the wretched and wicked trade of Begging; which is indeed to rob their wealthier Neighbours and the Publick of the useful Help of those Hands which were made for Labour, and ought to be so employ'd.

But now again the *Rich* must not disdain to be put in Mind, that they owe some sort of Duty even to the *Poor*.

(1.) As first, Humanity, I reckon, and Tenderness is a Due, that they ought never to deny to the *Poor*. For they may, nay they must without fear of lessening themselves by the Condescension) always consider them as Brethren of the same common Nature with themselves. And Human Nature, even in the meanest Guise, can never deserve sure to be thought contemptible by any of its own Kind. It must be a very unnatural sort of Pride to think it so, or to treat it as such; to think and act, as if the meer Outside and Trappings of a Man were that distinguish'd the *Species*, or rather created a new one; exalting the *Rich* into little Gods, and thrusting down the *Poor* into the Rank of the vilest *Beasts* or *Creeping Things*.

A piece of Contempt this, which, besides being so highly injurious to our fellow-Creatures, flies at last in the Face of God himself.

He that despiseth the Poor, reproacheth his Maker Prov. xv
; reproacheth the God that made him *poor*,⁵
and could have made this proud Despiser *poor*
: nay, who can at any time bring the state-

SERM.
IV.1 Sam. ii.
8.

liest Mortal that is; low and even with the Dust he treads on; and on the other hand often raiseth the Poor out of the Dust, and lifteth up the Beggar from the Dunghill to set them among Princes.—And this, not only to exercise his own Prerogative, but also to teach both Rich and Poor, that they are equally dependent upon Him; and that therefore no one ought to over-value himself on the score of his Wealth, or to despise and insult others that want, since the Difference in their Condition is purely precarious, and at the Will of their Sovereign Lord and Maker.

(2.) Another Duty that the Rich are bound to perform towards the Poor, is Justice; the Justice, I mean, of paying them the deserved Hire of their Labour, and rewarding their honest Industry. And this sort of Justice is for much the more strictly a Due, because Injustice in this case would be downright Cruelty and Barbarity. For what is it less to defraud or oppress those poor Souls whom Providence it self hath sufficiently straitned; not suffering them to get even an hard Living by the Sweat of their Brows, but most unmercifully forcing them both to sweat and to starve?

And

And this kind of Practice, barbarous as it is in itself, so it implies a very heinous Reflection upon God's Honour: For *He also that oppresseth the Poor, reproacheth his Maker*; as who should seem to think, that God hath left the *Poor* both unprovided for and unprotected; and that he made them for no other end, but to be very Slaves and Beasts of Burden to the *Rich*. But this is certainly a crying Provocation that will be heard and answered with a Vengeance one Day: For *Behold* (saith St. James, chap. v. v. 4.) *the Hire of the Labourers, which have reaped down your Fields, which is of you kept back by Fraud, crieth: and the Cries of them which have reaped, have entred into the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.*

(3.) The last Duty owing from the *Rich* to the *Poor*, that I shall now insist on, is (what I made mention of before) Charity. For though the *Poor* have no legal Demand upon the *Rich*, for that which is purely their free Benevolence, yet they have a Right that is superior and antecedent to all human Constitutions: For they claim under God, who is the supreme Lord and Proprietor of the Universe, and hath purposely so shared his own Distributions, that

SERM.
IV.

the Abundance of some might be a Supplement to the Want of others.

And, in Strictness of speaking, the Man, that in the Vogue of the World passes for a Master of many Thousands, is not the proper Owner of what he hath; he is only God's Steward: and the larger Estate he hath to manage, so much the greater is his Trust and Care in the Family; and he ought accordingly to give to every one their *Portion*, in due *Season*, and in full *Measure*: Which if he neglects to do, he is guilty of foul Ingratitude as well as Disobedience to his Lord, and manifest Wrong to his Fellow-Creatures, over whom he is made a Kind of *Ruler*. In Discharge of which honourable Trust, he ought to be both faithful and wise; faithful in bestowing his Alms according to his Abundance, giving a *Portion to seven and also to eight*, (nay to 50, to 100, to more if he can) *as not knowing what evil shall be upon the Earth*: and wise in contriving and managing his Charity, as may make it truly useful and beneficial, and, as far as is possible, (like our Saviour's Miracles, which were also Works of greatest Mercy) salutary at once both to Soul and Body. "He should

Eccelesiast.
xi. 2.

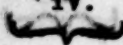
" take

“ take Care, not only to fortify and clothe
“ the Bodies of his needy Brethren with con-
“ venient Food and Raiment, but he should
“ contribute what he can to relieve their spiri-
“ tual Wants; to supply them with *the Bread*
“ *of Life that is from Heaven*; to clothe them
“ (as the Prophet *Isaiab* expresses it) *with the*
“ *Garments of Salvation*; to lend Eyes to their
“ blind Understandings, and Feet to their lame
“ Wills; to fashion their Manners aright at
“ first, or bring them again to their true Bent
“ whilst they are yet flexible; to keep them
“ *from turning aside into crooked Paths*, and to
“ *lead them in the Way everlasting.*”

III. And, whilst I am mentioning these
Things, I doubt not but you already perceive
where my *Application* will properly fall in.
You cannot indeed but have the Satisfaction
to perceive, that the Provision of late Years
made among yourselves, for the Education of
such *poor* Children as are destitute of their Pa-
rents Care or Help in this Particular, is that
same faithful and discreet, that useful and ex-
cellent Sort of Charity, which I have been de-
scribing, but need not recommend to you.

And

SECT.
IV.



And yet it may be fit to take some short Survey of this your Charity, that, by the *shining Light* it gives, others may be enabled to discern the Comeliness and Beauty of such good Works, and incited to glorify God, not only by more abundant Thanksgivings to him, but by additional Supplies to perfect so laudable and extensive a Design. And that the Design may appear to be in a good forward Way of advancing, you can already take upon you to say, that, in and about these Cities of *London* and *Westminster*, there are more than 3000 Children, of both Sexes, under the Christian Care and Tuition of the several Undertakers, Managers, and Promoters of this well-placed Charity: And all these Children are provided for and supplied, in some competent Degree such as is best suited to their Needs both of Soul and Body; the chief Regard being still had to their better and their nobler Part.

Some of them are not only taught and clad but entirely maintained; partly by Subscriptions and Collections, and Gifts and Legacies from well-disposed Persons, and partly too by the Contribution (as I may so call it) of their own proper Hands: For, where there is Con-

venience

venience, or Stock sufficient for it, they are
trained up to Work; which is no unprofitable
Piece of Learning, considering that an early
Habit of Idleness is the common Bane of those,
who cannot honestly hope to support Life or
otherwise than by their Labour.

Many amongst them, such as are best ca-
pable, are taught to write legibly, and cast Ac-
counts tolerably; and thereby the better fitted
for any future Employment or Vocation, to
which also they are timely applied, where the
Fund is large enough to afford it.

All, or most of them in the mean while
are modestly and plainly, but neatly apparelled,
or at least they wear some becoming Badge of
their Benefactor's Bounty; which serves too
to distinguish them from the unmortified Crew,
that lurk about the Streets, either to beg, or
to steal.

But whereinssoever they fall short, they are
all sure to be very carefully instructed in the
Fundamentals of the Christian Religion, ac-
cording to that Form of sound Words com-
mended in the Church-Catechism; by some fa-
miliar Exposition of which they are made ac-
quainted with the chief Heads both of Faith
and

SERM.
IV.

and Practice : and at the same Time they have the Precepts of Virtue frequently inculcated upon them, and the opposite Vices (such especially as are most incident to Youth) noted with some Mark of Disgrace, and forbidden under a severe Penalty ; that so, by this wholesome Instruction and Discipline, they may learn in the whole Course of their Lives to chuse and cleave to that which is Good, and to abhor that which is Evil.

The Improvement one would chiefly wish, in an Undertaking so well-concerted and so far advanced, is, that, as it shall please God to enlarge Mens Hearts, your Funds may grow proportionably, till they may suffice to keep *all* the Children employed at work, whilst they remain with you ; and afterwards, to place them out to Apprenticeship in some honest Trade or Occupation : that so, as they have been enured to Industry from the Beginning, they may be put into a Capacity of getting a future Subsistence, and of making the right Use and reaping the whole Benefit of the good Education that hath been bestowed upon them.

And I am firmly persuaded, that, through God's Blessing, you will never want fresh and

perpetual *Springs*, to feed and swell these enlivening *Streams*, that do already *make glad* so many of our Towns and Cities, and promise such Abundance of good Fruit of various Kinds.

For it is a Charity this, of the largest, the noblest, and most beneficial Influence. It is highly beneficial in the first Place to the poor Children themselves, who by this Means are opportunely preserved from the Contagion of ill Example, and that Corruption of Manners which too generally prevails; and are favourably prepossessed (whilst their Minds are yet undebauched) with a Sense of Religion, and some Relish of Virtue and Goodness.

It is (or may be) no less beneficial to their Parents, who, if they have but the Heart to make use of it, have the happy Opportunity put into their Hands, of becoming Scholars and Converts even to their own Children.

It is beneficial to all those Persons, to whom these Children may happen to bear any Relation afterwards, either in the Service of a Family, or at the Head of it, because they will have been accustomed to good Order from their Youth up, and thoroughly instructed to make
a Con-

SERM
IV.

a Conscience of doing their Duty, in that State of Life to which it shall please God to call them,

It is beneficial to the Publick, by disposing those to be useful and helpful Members in the Commonwealth, who most probably otherwise would have been at best unserviceable, if not hurtful and pernicious.

It is beneficial to the Church, by removing some Part of the Filth and Scandal that would otherwise lye at her Door, in Defiance of her much weakened and despised Discipline, to the foul Disgrace of our Christian Profession, and the great Decay of Piety and all Morality.

It is likely, in the last Place, to prove beneficial even to our late Posterity. For though Reformation be a Work that must go heavily on, where the Church's Censures are the Libertine's Scorn, and the Magistrate's Ax is not a sufficient Terror to the hardened Sinner; yet the bringing up of Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, who would otherwise have been cast out as the Off-spring and Refuse of the World, may probably put some Stop to the Propagation and Encrease of Wickedness, and cause the Generation that

is next growing up, to grow some little better : And this may reasonably induce those that follow after, to pursue the same hopeful Method ; which by Degrees may mend the Face of Things, and make Virtue once more to revive and flourish even amongst this degenerate People.

But why do I spend Words to set forth the Usefulness and Excellency of a Charity, that may much more easily be conceived, than it can be worthily expressed ? Especially, since you have a sensible Demonstration of it before your Eyes, that persuades at once more forcibly and more winningly, than any Kind of artificial Arguments, or any Words I could invent : I mean the very Objects of your Charity, these young and tender Plants, who, by your good Cultivation and timely Watering, are growing up in *Grace and the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, and are in a fair Way to bring forth Fruit unto Holiness.

I appeal to yourselves and your own Sentiments of the Thing, (nay I might appeal to the most careless Auditor here present, or the

SERM.
IV.

most unconcerned Spectator of this Day's humble Proceſſion). Is it not a goodly Sight, to ſee theſe *Poor* Children reſtored as it were to human Shape by your Care? And is not the decent Appearance they now make, together with You in the Houſe of God, a ſeaſonable *Memorandum*, that God is the Maker of them as well as you? and that they are made with the ſame Curioſity of Workmanſhip, and equally capable (and therefore equally worthy) of the ſame Improvements in Chriſtian Knowledge and Virtue with yourſelves?

And is it not a melodious Sound in your Ears, to hear them on Occaſion, as a Proceſſion of their Proficiency, rendering an Account of their Chriſtian Faith; and praying with you, and for you; and praizing God in Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Riches of his Grace, of the outward Means of which they alſo are made Partakers through your Liberality?

And is it not a Reflection that yields you much inward Complacency, that God has inclined your Hearts to be in the Stead of Foster-fathers to theſe expoſed *Innocents*; that you take them up when they were in Danger

erishing; to rescue them out of the Hands of Ignorance, Rudeness and Vice; to be their instructors in Christ; to dedicate them betimes to his Service, and teach them to serve him both with Understanding and Affection?

And is it not a very encouraging Motive to the Exercise of this sort of Charity, that who-ever is thus instrumental in *converting Sinners from the Error of their Ways*, or keeping *neglected Youth from the Paths of the Destroyer*, ^{James v. 20. Psal. xvii. 4.} *shall save many Souls from Death*, and *hide Multitudes of Sins*; Sins that would otherwise be derived down from Father to Son in too certain and constant a Succession?

And as the Prospect of advancing God's Glory, and procuring so much Good to Mankind I question not, a very powerful Incitement to You, to abound still more and more in this Labour of Love, so, I should hope too, Liberty may be sufficient, to provoke all those that have any Spark of godly Zeal, any Christian Compassion, any Kind of generous Passions in their Breasts, to put their helping Hand to this blessed Work, and strive together with you for the Honour of the Gospel, and for the Redemption of those *little Ones*, who are *scattered*

SERM.
IV.Matth.
ix. 36.
xviii. 14.1 Theff.
ii. 9.

(alas!) almost every where, *like Sheep without a Shepherd*, although *it is not the Will of our heavenly Father, that one of them should perish*.

And O that the Number of the Fellow-helpers in this necessary Work might daily increase! O that it might be a growing Emulation among Christians, thus to approve themselves the zealous and passionate Lovers of Souls! Were there never so many engaged in this noble Strife, there would be Room for them all to excel; nay, and Room for all to receive the Prize too, and to become Joint-sharers in the *same Hope and Joy and Crown of Rejoycing*. And, when the Rich and Poor shall meet together at last, before the Judgment Seat of Christ, and a particular Inquisition shall be made after Works of Mercy, *these very little Ones* appear, and chearfully testify on Behalf of their Benefactors: "We were an hungry
" and they have fed us; we were naked, and
" they have clothed us; we were ignorant
" and they have instructed us; we were base
" and vile, and they have refin'd us; we were
" in a manner forsaken and lost, and they
" have gathered us up, and restored us ever

" in

into thine Hands, O Lord, that art the Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls! " And then shall the merciful Judge, inasmuch as they have done thus to the *least of these his Brethren*, most graciously accept, impute, and reward it as done to himself. Then shall he richly recompense his own Gifts, in the meanest Services of those that have cared for the souls of the *Poor*; and thenceforward shall such wise Teachers as have turned many to Righteousness, shine forth as the Brightness of the Firmament, and as the Stars for ever and ever: And the more they are, the brighter will they shine, and reflect the greater Lustre on each other, to the Praise of the Glory of God's Grace, wherein they are accepted in the Beloved. Amen.

Dan. xii.

3.

Ephes. i. 6.

Now to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, be ascribed, as is most due, all Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and ever. Amen.

into thine Hands, O Lord, that art the
 Shepherd and Bishop of our Souls! And
 thou shalt the merciful Judge, inasmuch as
 they have done thus to the Law of thy
 will, thou shalt graciously accept, impute, and
 reward it as done to thyself. Then shall he
 highly recompense his own Gifts, in the mean-
 services of those that have cared for the
 souls of the Poor; and thenceforward shall
 the Gifts of the Father as have turned many to Right. Dan. xii.
 And the more they are, the brighter will they
 be, and reflect the greater Light on each
 and to the praise of the Glory of God's Grace, Ephe. i.
 when they are accepted in the Beloved. Antioch.
 And to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the
 Father and one God, be glorified, as it may
 be, all Glory and Honour, Dominion and
 Power, both now and for ever. Amen.
 And thus we have seen, in this our
 study, that in this our world, the
 rich and poor are both alike, and
 that the rich are not to be envied, and
 the poor are not to be despised.



A
S E R M O N

Preached at the Parish Church of

St. Laurence-Jewry,

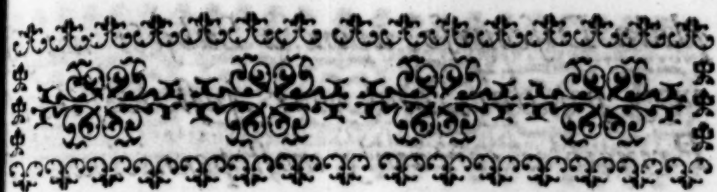
L O N D O N.

OCTOBER 5, 1708.



At a Vestry held this 7th Day of October, 1708. by the Parishioners of the united Parishes of St. Laurence Jewry and St. Mary Magdalen, Milk-Street, London.

IT is ordered, That the Church-Wardens, with several of the Parishioners, do attend the Reverend Dr. Moss, and give him Thanks for his Sermon, preached in this Parish the fifth of this Month: And that he be desired to print the same.



To the Church-Wardens and
Parishioners of St. Laurence-
fewry, and St. Mary Mag-
dal, Milk-street.

Gentlemen,

THIS Sermon (*the first I preach-
ed before You as Your Tuesday-
Lecturer*) I give up purely to your Im-
portunity, who, without my seeking or
desiring, have chosen me (though far
unequal) to stand in the Place, which
the eminent Dean of Canterbury has
filled for some Years, with so much de-
served Applause. And I was the ra-
ther induced to consent to this Publica-
tion, because it will at once testify to
the World your kind Approbation of a

DEDICATION.

*plain Discourse upon a Subject not so
very popular, and your just Dislike of
Principles certainly most pernicious. I
hope too it will be allowed to pass for
some small Testimony, how justly your
Favours are valued, and how thank-
fully accepted, by*

Gentlemen,

Your most faithful Servant,

Robert Moss.

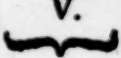
SERMON V.

2 COR. IV. 5.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your Servants for Jesus Sake.

ST. Paul, in the foregoing Part of this Epistle, takes Occasion to assert his own Authority, and to set forth the Dignity of his Office, and the Success of his Ministry, and his Fidelity and Sincerity in the Exercise of it, in Opposition to certain corrupt Teachers and crafty Walkers, who, in order to make the more gainful Merchandize of the Gospel, had adulterated it, as it should seem, with base Mixtures of their own, contrary both to sound Doctrine and good Manners.

SERM:
V.



But

SERM.
V.

But our Apostle, that he might sufficiently distinguish himself from these Seducers, openly renounces the hidden Things of Dishonesty, and disclaims all Dominion over the Faith of his *Corinthian* Converts : And though he was called, inspired, and assisted by God in a most extraordinary Manner, yet he frankly declared to them the Nature, Extent, and Design of his Commission, in these condescending Words ——— *'We preach not ourselves, &c.* As if he should have said, (in the Name of himself and the rest of his Collegues) “ We do not set up
“ ourselves as the Authors of your Faith,
“ your absolute Governors and Directors
“ We derive our Power from Christ Jesus the
“ Lord, to whom all Angels, Authorities and
“ Powers are made subject : *Him* and His
“ Doctrine we preach unto you ; and the End
“ and Intent of all our Ministrations is to be
“ helpful and serviceable to you in the Things
“ that concern your everlasting Salvation
“ This is the Work that our great Master hath
“ given us to do, and which we diligently attend
“ tend upon, in Obedience to his Commandments
“ and in Charity to your Souls.”

of the present Ministry prov'd.

171

SERM.
V.

And, abating for the Disparity that is always to be supposed between an inspired Apostle and an ordinary Pastor or Teacher, we have herein a succinct Account of the Ministerial Function, as it is exercised by such as are lawfully called thereunto: Of the Commission by which they are impowered; of the Instructions wherewith they are furnished; of the Nature of their Employment, and the Duty incumbent upon them.

Which three Heads therefore I shall resolve into so many Propositions, fairly deducible from my Text, viz.

I. That the Commission of the present Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel, is from *Christ Jesus the Lord*: They *preach not themselves*, nor *of themselves*, but by Vertue of his Authority.

II. That their Instructions are likewise from *Christ Jesus the Lord*: They are not to *preach themselves*, not their own Notions and Opinions, but Him, and his Blessed Gospel.
And

III. That

III. That the Nature of their Employment is to serve the Necessities of the Flock, and to help forward their eternal Salvation.

For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your Servants for Jesus Sake.

These three Propositions I shall endeavour to illustrate and confirm, and to improve by some useful Inferences. And I am to shew,

I. That the Commission of the present Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel is from *Christ Jesus the Lord*: They preach not themselves, nor of themselves, but by Vertue of his Authority.

It is true, that no Man, whatsoever some Enthusiasts may persuade themselves, can with any Truth or Modesty pretend to have received an immediate Commission from the Lord Christ, as had the first twelve Apostles, and the seventy Disciples, or *St. Paul*, whose Conversion and Call was more remarkable than any of the Apostles. But yet it is evident, from the Tenor of that original Commission which

our Saviour gave to the Twelve, and the extensive Promise thereunto annexed, that he from the first designed and ordained a perpetual Succession of Ministers, to be constantly preserved by his Providence, and supported by his special Presence and Power; and to be assisted, if not with the extraordinary, yet with all ordinary and necessary Gifts and Graces of his good Spirit, to fit them for the Work to which they were appointed.

This the bare Recital of the Words used by our Lord on that memorable Occasion will prove, I think, decisively. *As my Father hath sent me, so send I you*, says he, Jo. xx. 21. Which pregnant Words can admit of no other Construction but this, viz. That as he himself was sanctified, and set apart by God's peculiar Designation, as that great Prophet who was to be sent into the World, to declare the Will of his heavenly Father; so did he also sanctify and separate the Apostles, as his special Delegates to prophesy in his Name, and teach the Gospel (by him revealed) to every creature.

And of what Extent and Duration this their Commission was designed to be, that other celebrated

SERM.
V.

celebrated Passage, *Matth. xxviii. 19, 20.* will fully evince. *Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you: And lo, I am with you always, even unto the End of the World. Amen. — Even unto the End of the World. —* And yet the Apostles were themselves mortal, and short-lived as other Mortals; and therefore the Promise must of necessity extend to their Successors, to those who should be delegated by them to the same Charge which they had received from Christ, and so on successively *εως τῆς συντελειας τῆς αἰῶνος*, i. e. till the Consummation of all Things, as *Grotius* and *Hammond*, and with them all Interpreters truly learned and pious understand that Expression in this Place.

And this Interpretation is both natural and easy, and solid and well-grounded: For the Word *αἰών*, which we translate *World*, may perhaps more strictly signify an Age. But it is used for the most Part in the *New Testament* not for the Age of a Man, nor for one hundred Years (commonly reckoned an Age or Generation) but for an Age of the World, or some

eminent Period or Division of Time therein. And two such Periods there were, much mentioned and famed among the Jews, viz. the Age and State precedent and preparatory to the Messiah, and the Age and State under the Administration of the Messiah. The Age preparatory to the Messiah was now concluded, and the Kingdom of the Messiah actually commenced upon our Lord's Resurrection; *all Power* being then given him (and he assumes it to himself, v. 18.) *in Heaven and in Earth*. And the first Exercise of this Power was the Commission that he gave to his Apostles in the Words following: In executing which Commission, he hath promised to second and support them (after his Ascent into Heaven) by the special Presence and Assistance of his Spirit, *πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας*, continually to the End of the Age. And this being the last Age, there being no other State to succeed this, Christ's Promise can have no other Period to determine it but the End of the World; and consequently the Power now personally invested in the Apostles, and the special Assistance promised to them, must of Course descend upon their Successors, and be uninterruptedly continued to the World's End,

in

SERM.

V.

This, I take it, is the Ground upon which this Interpretation is built, and it is too firm to be shaken by all the vain Attempts of that gain-saying Generation of Men, who employ all their Art, all their Engines, to pull down ancient Truth, and every Thing else established.

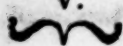
But to proceed. In Confirmation of the same Doctrine, St. Paul informs us, *Ephes. iv. 11, 12.* That Christ gave *some Apostles, some Evangelists, some Pastors and Teachers*: And to what End? *For the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ.*

Which End could not be effectually answered, unless a constant Succession of Ministers had been included in the first Grant and Donation. For there was need from the Beginning (besides the Business of Discipline and Government) there was need, I say, of able Guides and Instructors, to confirm those who had been converted by the Apostles, to administer the Sacraments duly to them, to feed them with the sincere Milk of the Word, and to improve them still more and more in Christian Knowledge and Practice.

And *this* being a Need that will always attend the Church of God, during its Militant State here upon Earth, it is highly reasonable to suppose that there was a suitable Provision made for it by the wise Founder thereof: And it were extremely unreasonable indeed to interpret the Scriptures already produced, or any else that look with the same Aspect, to a contrary Sense and Meaning.

Especially since the Practice of the Apostles themselves, whilst they lived and presided over the Church, is so plain an interpreter of Christ's own Mind and Will in this Particular. For we find in express Scripture, that they did, with Prayer and by Imposition of Hands, set apart certain Persons for the Ministry; and impowered and directed those Persons in like Manner to ordain others, that so there might be a constant Supply of Men duly qualified, both to rule and feed the Flock of Christ.

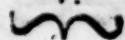
And this regular Mission and Succession has been continued down to this very Day, the chief governing and ordaining Part being reserved, according to the Apostolical Pattern, to Bishops in peculiar, and the Dispensing of the

SERM.
V.

Word and Sacraments being committed to
Presbyters, in Subordination to their Bishops.

And in this very Manner, and according to this very Rule, are the Ministers of this Church at present (and of all Churches rightly constituted) ordained and dedicated to the Ministry: And they apparently derive the spiritual Power, with which they are invested, from the original Fountain of all Power, and by the proper Conveyance that was at first appointed; that is to say, by the Hands of those to whom it hath been handed down through a Series of seventeen Centuries from the Apostles, who received it immediately from Christ himself.

Let me only add here, that as they receive their Commission from Christ, so they are honoured with a peculiar Relation to him, and may, in their Proportion, lay Claim to the same Style and Title, that the Apostles so frequently assume to themselves, being *Ministers of God, Ministers of Jesus Christ, Ministers of the New Testament, and of the Gospel, Ambassadors for Christ, Stewards of God, of the Mysteries of God, of the manifold Grace of God, and the like.*



say these honourable Appellations do in a Proportion belong to them, because they are employed in that which was the ordinary Work and Office of the Apostles, though not endowed with those extraordinary and miraculous Gifts, which the Exigency of Things made necessary in the Infancy of the Church, but not so necessary to be continued in After-times, when it had gathered Strength, and gained a firm Establishment in the World.

And this, I hope, may suffice to illustrate and confirm the Truth of my first Proposition, *viz.* That the present Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel have their Commission from Christ Jesus the Lord: They *preach not themselves*, nor of themselves, but by Virtue of his Authority. And this is a Truth that, I dare presume to prophesy, will stand and fall with the Gospel itself.

And yet after all I will not dissemble, that it hath been boldly asserted of late, by a more disingenuous * Caviller perhaps, and a more scurrilous Scoffer than ever was *Julian* the Apostate, that that Promise of our Lord's,

* Vid. The Rights of the Christian Church, p. 163, 164.

SERM.
V.

Lo, I am with you always, &c. Ample and extensive as it may seem, can with no Colour of Reason be extended farther than to the Persons of the Apostles, and the Time they were to live : Or, if we will needs have it extended to After-ages, that it is gross Partiality to confine it to the Clergy, exclusive of the Church, or Body of Christians : Or lastly supposing the Promise to be made only to the Clergy, that it infers no Right in the Apostles, of communicating the Power they had received to their Successors after them, for the Support and good Government of the Christian Church.

In direct Confutation of which wretched Cavils, I would undertake to prove, (would the Time admit) that the Promise must of Necessity extend farther than to the Persons and Age of the Apostles ; both because it was a Work of longer Time that they were employed about, and because in Fact the Work was not completely finished by the Apostles, in their own Persons, or their own Times. I would prove farther, that the Commission was directly given, and the Promise made to the Clergy, (as Successors to the Apostles) separate from, and
exclusive

exclusive of all others : I would prove lastly, that the Promise must of Necessity include a Right in the Apostles, of delegating a competent Authority to their Successors after them, both to rule and feed Christ's Flock ; and that both because they did actually take upon them to communicate such a Power, (in which it cannot be imagined that they should go beyond their Commission) and because the Nature and State of Things, as well as the Tenor of the Promise, did absolutely so require. For the larger Proof of all which Particulars, I now make myself your Debtor against some other convenient Opportunity.

In the mean Time, as I believe you to be all Christians, thoroughly so persuaded, and soberly-minded and well-disposed, so I doubt not but if you should happen to hear it asserted, in the prophane Strain of this Age *,

" That the Clark hath as good a Title to the
" Priesthood, as the Parson ; that the Power
" of consecrating the Elements, which the
" Priest arrogates to himself, may deserve
" rather to be called *Conjuration* than *Conse-*

* Vid. The Rights of the Christian Church. Passim.

SERM.
V.

“ *creation* ; that the Minister is the meer
 “ Creature of the Magistrate, as the Magi-
 “ strate is of the People, and to be made and
 “ unmade at Pleasure ; that the civil Power
 “ is the sole Fountain of all Ecclesiastical
 “ Power, and that the Ministers of Christ
 “ have no Power that is Internal and Spiritu-
 “ al, strictly so called :” I say, I doubt
 not but you will reject these, and such like
 monstrous Assertions, with the utmost Abhor-
 rence, and resolve to have no *Fellowship* with
 such pernicious *Works of Darkneſs* ; as con-
 cluding that such an open Defiance of the
 Christian Religion, and such avowed Contra-
 diction to some of its most Catholic and Fun-
 damental Truths, is no other than a covert
 Way of undermining all Religion, and intro-
 ducing the wildest Libertinism, Deism, and
 (if it were possible) downright Atheism in the
 Room of it.

II. I proceed now to my second Head, *viz.*
 That the Instructions of the Ministers and
 Preachers of the Gospel are likewise from *Christ*
Jesus the Lord : They are not to *preach them-*
selves, not their own Notions or Opinions, but
Him and his Blessed Gospel.

And

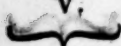
And this is pursuant to that original Commission which Christ gave to his Apostles, when he sent them to disciple all Nations; for he prescribes expressly what it was they were to teach them, *even to observe all Things whatsoever he had commanded them*, Matth. xx. 21. So that their direct Charge was to deliver those very Precepts to the Jews and Gentiles, whom they were to convert, which they themselves had received from that infallible Teacher who sent them upon this Embassy. And indeed, Jesus Christ himself, and the mysterious Oeconomy of Man's Redemption by him accomplished, was the only *Foundation*, as St. Paul avows, that they, or any Man could lay, or safely build upon.

And accordingly we find that St. Peter, in his first Sermon (at which three thousand Souls were converted) took Jesus of *Nazareth* for his Text, pronouncing him to be *a Man approved of God by Signs and Wonders*; and appealing to the Jews own Knowledge for the Truth of the Matter; upbraiding them for being his Crucifiers; bearing Testimony to his Resurrection and Ascension; and ascribing the Effusion of the Holy Ghost to his Vertue

Acts ii.
22, 23,
32, 33,
36.

SERM.

V.



and Power; and lastly, declaring him to be both Christ and Lord, the very Messiah, that the Jews so earnestly expected.

Acts iii.
13, &c.

Acts iv.
12.

And, at the next Opportunity, we find him repeating and confirming the same, and preaching *Repentance and Remission of Sins in his Name*; and asserting at another Time, that *there is not Salvation in any other; that there is none other Name under Heaven, given among Men, whereby we must be saved.* And He and the rest of the Apostles *cease not, we read, in the Temple and in every House to teach and preach Jesus Christ, Acts v. 42.*

Acts ix.
20.
xiii. 30,
38.

1 Cor. ii.
2.

And St. Paul, as soon as ever he was illuminated Himself, proclaimed the same Doctrine both to the Jews and Gentiles: *Jesus the Son of God; Jesus, and Forgiveness of Sins through Him; Jesus and the Resurrection, &c.* And instead of all other Recommendations, he plainly tells the *Corinthians*, that he had determined to know nothing among them, save *Jesus Christ and him crucified.*

This is the Sum and Substance of that Doctrine which the first Teachers of Christianity unanimously advanced; these are the Instructions that they constantly pursued: And by

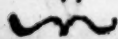
the same the Ministers of the Gospel at this Day are certainly bound up, by the same they ought always to be directed.

They are not, they must not think themselves at Liberty, to preach their own darling Opinions, or curious Speculations, or useless Inventions ; much less their own Prejudices, Passions, or Errors, for the sacred Oracles of God : But they are obliged to bring every Thing that they adventure to propose to the Standard of the Gospel, and to build nothing that is a Superstructure of their own, beside the only true *Foundation*, which is Christ.

They ought to preach the Incarnation, Life, Death, Resurrection, and Exaltation of the Son of God ; together with the Necessity and Sufficiency of that Satisfaction which he made upon the Cross, for the Sins of the whole World.

They ought to preach that Faith and Repentance, which he hath been pleased to make the Gospel Conditions of Salvation ; and that Remission of Sins and Justification by God's free Grace, which is the precious Gospel Privilege.

They

SERM.
V.

They ought to preach the Aid and Efficacy of the Holy Spirit, as necessary to prevent and further us in all that we think or do ; and that *Life and Immortality*, which Christ brought to Light through the Gospel, as the great Encouragement to all our honest and pious Endeavours.

And they ought, in preaching, to shew the vast Moment and Importance of all these Gospel Truths, and the powerful Influence, that, if rightly considered and applied, they would have upon Mens Lives and Manners.

And they ought also, upon this Foundation, to preach good sound Morality ; not as 'tis lamely and coldly taught in the Schools of the Philosophers, but as 'tis more perfectly comprized, and refined from all Adulteration and Corruptions, in Christ's admirable Sermon upon the Mount, and commented upon and explained in St Paul's Epistles, and other the canonical Writings,

This Christian Morality, I say, the Ministers of the Gospel ought to preach and inculcate, deriving its Obligation from the Authority of our supreme *Law-giver, who is able*

to save and to destroy; placing its Essence (where it ought to be) in a Principle of Love and Duty towards God, fixing the Measures of it by the exactest Standard, the Precepts and Example of Christ; resolving the Power of it into the Efficiency of Divine Grace; and lastly, enforcing the Practice of it by the mighty Motive of eternal Rewards and Punishments.

And when the Ministers of God do thus faithfully propose any Part or Point of the Christian Religion, whether doctrinal or moral, and support what they have to offer, by Proofs immediately fetched from Scripture, or by other Arguments well consisting with Scripture, and the Analogy of Faith; I say, in so doing, they act in Pursuance of their proper Instructions, *and preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord.* And in particular, when they press the Practice of any Thing that is morally good, (or dissuade the contrary) upon the Principles and Motives above-mentioned, then do they preach true Divinity and Christianity, then also *do they preach Christ Jesus the Lord.*

For

SERM.

V.

For though it may possibly be said (as a most * Reverend Person, whose Name is famous here, and wherever else the *English* Tongue is known and understood, once watchfully objected to himself) “ This is all mere Morality, there is not one Word of Jesus Christ in it; yet (as that great Prelate and Preacher justly retorted) “ it is Scripture Morality, it is Christian Morality “ and I hope that Jesus Christ is truly Preached, whenever his Will, and Laws, and the Duties enjoined by the Christian Religion “ are inculcated upon Us.”

Whenever therefore we preach up Humility, Meekness, Purity, Peaceableness, Justice, Charity, Prudence, Patience, godly Sincerity, Veracity, Candor, Courtesy, and the like; these it must in all Reason be allowed, that we preach *Jesus Christ*, because we preach up those Virtues and Graces, that were most conspicuous in His our great Exemplar, that are most earnestly recommended in the New Testament, and that are highly ornamental to a Christian's Life.

On the other Hand, when we preach against Pride, Peevishness, Strife, Envy, Sedition

* Vid. Archbishop Tillotson's Sermon against evil Speaking

tion, Schism, Injustice, Unmercifulness, Intemperance, Uncleanneſs, Hypocriſy, Diffimulation, Cenſoriousneſs, Uncharitableneſs, or the like; then alſo it muſt not be denied but that we *preach Jeſus Chriſt*, becauſe we preach againſt thoſe Sins, againſt which he himſelf has more particularly revealed the Wrath of God from Heaven.

In ſum, to *preach Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*, is to deliver the *Truth as it is in Jeſus*, it is to ſpeak plainly as the Oracles of God direct, upon all uſeful Subjects Divine and Moral, without wreſting or warping our Comments upon Scripture, or Deductions from Scripture, by Way of Accommodation to Times and ſeaſons, to particular Events and Occurrences, to fashionable Opinions, to prevailing Errors, to Intereſt or Policy, or any other ſiniſter View whatſoever.

And by this Time it is hoped, that I may have ſaid enough to clear and eſtabliſh my ſecond Propoſition, to wit, That the Miniſters and Preachers of the Goſpel received their Inſtructions from *Chriſt Jeſus the Lord*: That they are not to *preach themſelves*, not their own notions or Opinions, but *Him* and *his* Bleſſed Goſpel:

SERM.

V.

Gospel : And I have also shewn, when and how they may be said to acquit themselves pursuant to the Instructions they have received. I hasten now,

III. To my third and last Proposition, viz. That the Nature of their Employment is to serve the Necessities of the Flock, and to help forward their eternal Salvation. *We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your Servants for Jesus Sake.* Which latter Clause, I think, is evidently to be interpreted of his being serviceable to them in their spiritual Concerns, and in the grand Affair of their Salvation : because it is absurd to suppose that the Office of an Apostle, as such, should imply any Thing of Servility ; or that St. Paul, whilst he disclaims any direct Dominion over the *Corinthians* Faith, should profess a direct Subjection to them, even in the Administration of his Office ; or that he should be in a strict Sense, and in a proper Relation, a Servant to them, whom he elsewhere calls his Sons, and asserts his paternal Authority over them, as having *begotten them through the Gospel*. 1 Cor. iv. 15.

Beside

Besides, 'tis apparent enough, that the Apostolical Function, as such, did imply an eminent and immediate Relation to God; upon which Account it is, that St. Paul styles himself in the Entrance of his Epistle to the Romans, Paul the Servant of Jesus Christ: And why? because he was called to be an Apostle, and separated to the Gospel of God.

And, for the same Reason, he calls Epaphras, Colof. i. 7. his dear Fellow-Servant, who (adds he) is for you a faithful Minister of Christ. Christ's Minister he properly was, though his Ministration was for the Behoof and Benefit of the Colossians, whom, by a Delegation from St. Paul, he had visited and converted. And, in the same Sense, St. Paul here presents himself and Brethren as the Co-laborers with the Romans Servants for Jesus Sake; that is, as ministering to their spiritual and eternal Good, by the Mission and Appointment of Jesus Christ: And they might aptly enough call themselves Servants, in respect of the Laboriousness and Difficulty of their Task, though not upon the Account of any servile Relation that they bore to the Persons whom they freely ministered to. For even the Angels them-

selves

SERM.
V.

Heb. i. 14.

selves are called *ministring Spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be Heirs of Salvation*: And yet it would be incongruous to infer from thence, that they are in Station or Condition servilely subject to mortal Men.

And as the Office of the Apostles was, in its first Source, exempt from all Servility, so the Power delegated by them to others was free from any such Clog or Incumbrance. For St. Paul, we find, gives a solemn Charge to his Son Timothy, to *reprove, rebuke, exhort with all Long-suffering and Doctrine*, i. e. where there was any Hope of working upon ingenuous Tempers by the Spirit of Meekness: But the Charge to Titus runs higher. Tit. ii. 15. *These Things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all Authority; let no Man despise thee*. He is directed to act boldly, as in the Name of God, that he might not incur the Contempt of Men that were disposed to be refractory and disobedient.

And it must in Reason be presumed, that even the Office of the ordinary standing Pastors of the Church includes nothing in it so base and mean, as to make it the Object of Contempt. For, were it so, the Institution

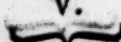
itself would be in vain, since the Nature of Mankind is such, that they will not easily be influenced or guided by those, whom they look down upon with Scorn and Disdain : From whence, by the by, it appears, how disserviceable it must needs be to Religion in general, to have the Ministers of it made cheap and despicable in the Eyes of the People ; which, as some observing Men are apt to think, is not so openly and industriously done in any Country, that is either Christian or Civil, as it is in this of ours, which is Protestant and Reformed.

The Occasion of which Complaint is chiefly owing to the licentious * Pens of this Age, who, as they are very free to tax the Christian Clergy, as if they deriv'd some of their most venerable Mysteries and most important Powers from the Heathen Priests ; so (to do them Justice) they are far enough from copying after the Heathen Laity, in that profound Regard which generally they paid to the Priests of *Jupiter*, the *Mother of the Gods*, or other their fictitious Deities.

* History of Religion : Rights of the Christian Church, &c.

SERM.

V.

 In the mean Time, there can be nothing in the Function of the Christian Priesthood itself, that should render it contemptible, but quite the contrary. For to be the Ministers of God, is an honourable Relation; to wait at his Altar is an honourable Attendance; to be the Dispensers of his Word and Sacraments, is a high Trust; to have the Care and Guidance of his Flock, is a weighty Charge, that requires no mean Sufficiency.

And what is it, after all these Honours, that should sink the Ministers Character so very low in vulgar Opinion? Is it, that they owe a Service to the People, with the Care of whom they are intrusted? But in this they are still the Servants of God, under the *great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls*. And the Service that they owe is of a spiritual Kind, suited to the several Exigencies of their Flock, over whom they ought to be continually watching for Good, and to administer to all their Necessities, as the special Case shall happen to require. Their Business is, in a Word, with all Patience to instruct the Ignorant, with all Meekness to admonish and exhort the Knowing, with all Carefulness to confirm the Wavering, with all

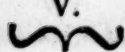
Caution to direct the Doubtful, with all Com-
passion to comfort the Afflicted, and to restore
the Desponding; with all Earnestness to excite
the Lazy, and to awaken the Secure; with
all Long-suffering to recall the Erroneous, and
with all Authority to correct the Scandalous,
and to menace the Presumptuous.

This is the Nature of the Ministers Em-
ployment, these are some of the chief Branches
of their Duty; in discharging of which, they
are willing to be the Servants of Men, in O-
bedience to God's holy Ordinance, and in or-
der to bring them to Heaven and Happiness.
*We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the
Lord; and ourselves your Servants for Jesus
Sake.* Accept, we beseech you, of this Ser-
vice.

Hitherto, Beloved, you have heard me at
large, concerning the Commission and Instruc-
tions of the Ministers and Preachers of the
Gospel, together with the Nature of their
Duty and Employment. If ye will suffer
now a few Hints, concerning the respective
Duty of the People that are their Hearers,
towards *them*, I will do it very briefly, and
only by way of Inference.

SERM.

V.



I. First then, if the Ministers of the Gospel do indeed derive their Commission from *Christ Jesus*, (which none but a Disciple of *Leviathan*, no sound Christian, to be sure, can deny) then certainly their Hearers are oblig'd to pay 'em all that Reverence and Regard, which is suitable to the Relation and Character that they bear.

I am apprehensive enough, tho' not at all at this Time, or in this Place) that a Man generally persuades but little, when he goes about to plead for Respect to Himself and his own Order. And yet 'tis always allowed to be a thing both fitting and commendable, in those that hold any Place or Trust under an earthly Prince, to keep up the Dignity of their Commission, and to insist upon that Observance and Respect, especially in the Execution of their Office, which is customary and decent.

And sure it will be allow'd, by more than parity of Reason, that God's Ministers, the *Stewards of his Mysteries, and Ambassadors for Christ*, may justly expect to be rever'd and honour'd, for the sake of Him whose Commissioners they are; and for whose sake they

are contented to be your *Servants* in Spiritual Matters. They may, at least, of right demand and insist upon so much Deference and Regard, as may serve to prepare the Peoples Minds the better to receive the Message that they bring; so much, at least, as may add Weight to their Admonitions, Force to their Exhortations, and Edge to their Reprehensions, and preserve the Solemnity of all their Ministerial Acts and Offices.

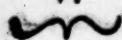
2. If the Ministers of the Gospel do also receive their Instructions from *Christ Jesus the Lord*, if they are *not to preach themselves*, not their own Notions and Opinions, but *Him* and *his* blessed Gospel; it will follow, that when they do strictly pursue these their Instructions, when they do preach the Christian Faith, and Christian Morality, supported by Reasons directly fetch'd from Scripture, or such at least as are consonant to Scripture, then are the Hearers obliged to receive what they hear, *not as the Word of Men, but, as it is in Truth, the Word of God*. For as the Ministers themselves are not warranted to obtrude their own Inventions or Speculations, much less their Prejudices, Passions and Er-

SERM.
V.

rors for so many indubitable Oracles ; so nei-
 ther are the Hearers to be justified in rejecting
 or cavilling at such Doctrine as is Scriptural
 Authentick, and unquestionably True, merely
 because it happens not to square with some
 prejudicate Notions of their own, or with their
 darling Lusts or Interests, or with the Politici-
 an's Schemes, or the Intrigues of the Worldly
 wise, or the doubling Practices of a Faction
 or Party, or perhaps because it touches upon
 too tender a part, and lays open some secret
 Ulcer in their Consciences. I say, these can
 never be sufficient Reasons for rejecting any
 Doctrine that is agreeable to Scripture; for
 tho' our Church does allow a Judgment of
 Discretion, yet 'tis not such a Judgment
 is perfectly arbitrary; and the Authority of
 Scripture and Scriptural Truths can never be
 suppos'd to depend ultimately upon the good
 liking of the Audience; who are permitted in-
 deed (as it is fit they should) to *prove all things*
 but are nevertheless oblig'd, at their Peril, to
hold fast that which is good. In the mean time
 it is but a small thing in a sober Estimation
 to be judged of Man's Judgment; for the time God

will come when we must all appear before the
Judgment-Seat of Christ, and then the Sound-
ness of the Preacher's Doctrine, and of the Hear-
ers Hearts, shall both be weighed in an impar-
tial Balance..

3. If the Ministers Duty and Employment
be to serve the spiritual Necessities of the Flock,
and to minister to their Salvation, if the Ser-
vice that they owe be of a spiritual kind;
when 'tis evident, That the People ought not
to expect any carnal Compliances from them,
such as are Base, Servile and Abject. In par-
ticular, it must never be expected, that they
should suit their Doctrine to the Palate of a
sensual Age; that they should *smooth their*
Tongues (as the Prophet *Jeremy* speaks) and
study to please, even at the expence of Truth;
that they should strike in with popular Opini-
ons, tho' never so erroneous; that they should pal-
late Vices that are fashionable and predominant;
that they should in any wise *handle the*
Word of God deceitfully, so as to cherish People
in their Ignorance, encourage them in their
Follies, or harden them in their Sins. No:
God forbid that the Pulpit should ever be de-
voted to so vile a Purpose! God forbid that

SERM.
V.

any one, who has the Honour to be call'd a Minister of the Gospel, should so far prostitute both his Office and his Conscience, and at once betray the Honour of God, and the Safety of the Souls of whom he has the Care. I will not therefore entreat you, my beloved Brethren, I will rather suppose that you need not be entreated, not to add to the Difficulty and Toilsomness of our Task, by such unreasonable Expectations; in which if you were gratified, it would prove as delusive and destructive to yourselves, as it were every way unworthy of Us and our Vocation. I speak not this, as if I were under the least Apprehension, that any such culpable Compliance were expected here from me. The honourable Regard and generous Treatment that many excellent Persons, who have been your *Servants for Jesus sake*, have still found at your Hands, is the best Assurance to me, that You are indeed able to *endure sound Doctrine*. And the Manner in which you have called me (however unworthy) to this Office among you, was so very Decent, so extremely Obliging, that I cannot but persuade myself that I shall always be heard favourably and candidly

candidly. I was only willing to give you an honest Specimen of that Plainness and Freedom of Speech, with which you are like to be entertain'd, and by which I hope to recommend my self to every Man's Conscience in the Sight of God.

Let us all therefore endeavour to follow the excellent Advice of St. Peter, 1 Ep. ii. 1. and laying aside all Malice, and all Guile, and Hypocrisies, and Envy, and all evil Speakings, as New-born Babes desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby. So shall We have Comfort in our Ministry, and You shall reap the Benefit of it. And so preaching, and so practising, we trust, thro' God's Mercy, that neither We that are Preachers, nor You that are Hearers, shall finally become Cast-aways. Amen.



A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

Q U E E N

AT

St. *JAMES's* CHAPEL,

On *Wednesday, March 15, 1709-10.*

B E I N G

The Day appointed by HER MAJESTY
for a General FAST and HUMILIATION, to be
observed in a most Solemn and Devout Manner,
for obtaining the Pardon of our Sins, and im-
ploring God's Blessings and Assistance on the
Arms of Her Majesty and Her Allies engag'd in
the present War; and for restoring and perpe-
tuating Peace, &c.



A
SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN

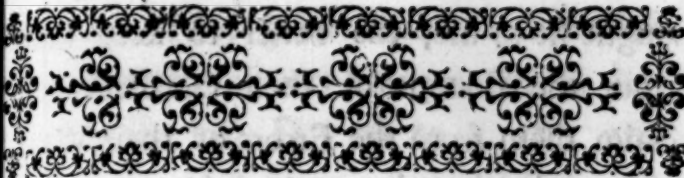
AT

ST JAMES'S CHAPEL,

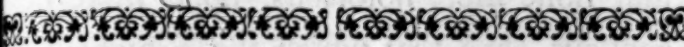
On Wednesday, March 12, 1702-10.

BEING

The Day appointed by HER MAJESTY
for a General Fast and Humiliation, to be
observed in a most Solemn and Devout Manner,
for obtaining the Pardon of our Sins, and in
pleasing God's Blessings and Assistance on the
Affairs of Her Majesty and Her Allies engag'd in
the present War; and for restoring and perpe-
tuating Peace, &c.



S E R M O N VI.



ECCLES. VIII. II.

*Because Sentence against an evil Work is not
executed speedily ; therefore the Heart of
the Sons of Men is fully set in them to do
Evil.*

TH E Degeneracy and Corruption SERM.
VI.
of Mankind, so much and so justly
complain'd of, betrays itself in no-
thing more than in this, that Men are so
far from thankfully accepting the manifold
Tokens of God's Goodness, and Loving-
Kindness towards them, that they are much
rather industriously to set themselves to defeat,
what lyes in them, the gracious Designs of
his Providence, and to pervert those very
Means which the Divine Wisdom hath
thought

SERM.
VI.

thought fit to use, the better to keep them within the Bounds of their Obedience, to reclaim them from the Errors of their Ways, and to make them happy both here and hereafter.

And among the many Instances of this Kind, none more notorious, none more disingenuous than that which the Preacher here remarks, and every Day's Observation furnishes fresh Examples of; namely, Mens hardening themselves in their Wickedness upon Presumption of Impunity: Which Presumption they most unreasonably and impiously build upon their undeserv'd Experience of God's Patience and Forbearance for the time past.

Because Sentence against an Evil Work is not executed speedily; therefore the Heart of the Sons of Men is fully set in them to do Evil.
— That is,

“ Because Sinners are not immediately
“ seiz'd by Vengeance, and haled, as it
“ were, to publick Execution; because such
“ Examples of Terror are not perpetually
“ before Mens Eyes, therefore they who
“ are wickedly bent, hug themselves in their

“ Secu-

Divine Providence justify'd.

207

SERM.
VI.

Security ; They grow careless and fearless, not dreaming of any Danger ; or at least putting the evil Day off to a very great Distance, and flattering themselves, that the God with whom they have to do is exceeding merciful, even to Easiness, and that the slightest, and the latest Repentance will be sufficient to appease Him.

These, and such as these, seem to be the *Thoughts* that presumptuous Sinners cherish in their Hearts, to embolden themselves in their Sins ; if that deserves to pass for *Thinking*, which is indeed the Effect of a most wretched Infatuation, and is equally injurious to God's Honour, and pernicious to their own Souls. In order therefore, both to wipe off the foul Imputation that is cast upon Providence by such harden'd Offenders, and to give some check to the Progress of daring Impiety, I shall, in this Discourse,

I. Apply my self to prove, that the ordinary Procedure of Divine Providence, in delaying or suspending the Punishment of Sinners in this World, is agreeable to the truest Measures of Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice. And,

II. As

SERM.
VI.

II. As consequent upon this, I shall shew that it is a very unjust Objection to a very kind Providence, to imagine, that this is any Encouragement to sin; and a very grievous Abuse for Sinners to make it so. And then,

III. I shall intimate, what Construction and Use Men, in Reason and Conscience ought to make of such God's providential Dispensations. And this I shall offer with particular Regard to ourselves, and the Occasion of the present Solemnity.

I. I shall apply myself to prove, that the ordinary Procedure of Divine Providence, in delaying or suspending the Punishment of Sinners in this World, is agreeable to the true Measures of Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice.

But, before I enter upon the Proof of this Point, it may not be amiss to premise a judicious Observation of *Plutarch*, a learned Heathen, who hath himself treated on the very Argument! † And he prefaces his Disquisition with this Caution, that the easiest and the surest way of answering all Difficulties

† Vide Plut. Περὶ τοῦ ὑπὸ τῷ θεῷ ἐκείνῳ ἐκαστὸς τιμωρῆσθαι. Plut. 549, 550.

ties, is to say, That God is the only wise Physician, who knows how to apply the Remedy to Wickedness, as every one's Case requires, in the proper Season, and the most effectual Manner. It would become Us therefore, even according to this Heathen, to acquiesce in God's Method, though we were unable to give any satisfactory Account of it. And yet He attempted, and not unsuccessfully, to account for it from the meer Light of Nature; and therefore We, who have Revelation to guide and enlighten our Enquiries, need not doubt of finding all reasonable Satisfaction, and clearly discovering, how agreeable this Method is to the truest Measures of Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice.

Those I conceive to be the truest Measures of Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice, which are every way worthy of God, and entirely consistent with each other. For God being infinite in these, as in all other his Perfections, it must never be suppos'd, that the Exercise of his Goodness should be any Impeachment to his Wisdom, or Obstruction to his Justice: And as little is it to

SERM.
VI.

be suppos'd, that his Wisdom should ever deviate in the least from his Justice, or Goodness; or his Justice, again, act separate from either of the other two.

Now it will appear, upon Examination, that, in delaying or suspending the Punishment of Sinners in this World, there is a most admirable Harmony of Divine Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice :

And this will appear from these Reasons following. (1.) Because the contrary Method would have been altogether unreasonable and impracticable. (2.) Because there are several excellent Purposes serv'd in this way, which perhaps could not otherwise be so well pursued. (3.) Because there is a sufficient Discouragement to sin notwithstanding.

(1.) The contrary Method would have been altogether unreasonable and impracticable. By saying it would have been unreasonable and impracticable, I mean at least, that it were not to be reconcil'd with all the clearest Notions we can frame to ourselves of the Divine Perfections; nor with the plain Intendment of Providence and Grace, both in governing and redeeming a World of Sinners.

For

Divine Providence justify'd.

211

SERM.
VI.

For whatever absolute Power, and rigid Justice, might do or justify, this is certain, that the Government of the World supposes its Preservation; and both must be the equal Care of a wise and good Providence. But if it were necessary to the well-governing the World, that Sinners, upon the Commission of any Sin, should immediately be seiz'd in the very Act, and punish'd to the Extremity, the degenerate Race of Mankind had long since been rooted out, and the Earth wholly dispeopled. So that, upon this Supposition, God could not govern the World without destroying it; which were such a Defect of Wisdom, or such an Inconsistency between Wisdom and Justice, as cannot be admitted in a Being that is absolutely perfect.

It is true, God did once sweep away a whole Race of Sinners (eight Persons only excepted) by a Deluge of Waters, which stands recorded for a Monument of his Vengeance to all succeeding Generations: But he promised, that he would not *any more smite every Thing living, as he had done*; and that *while the Earth remaineth, Seed-time and Harvest, and Cold and Heat, and Summer and*

Gen. viii.
21, 22.

SERM.
VI.

Winter, and Day and Night should not cease.

And this his Promise, as it flowed from his infinite Goodness, so was it founded upon this wise Reason, that such extream Rigour, had it been repeated, could not well have been made to consist with the Preservation of the World, nor indeed with the Nature and State of Mankind, by whom it is inhabited.

For it is to be remembered, that Man was created a free Agent, capable of serving and glorifying God; and that he was sent into this World, to perform this reasonable Service; and to give proof of his Ingenuity and Obedience. But this End had in great measure been defeated, if it had been the fix'd Decree of Heaven, to punish Sinners to the uttermost, without the least Reprieve or Respite. For though the Terror of certain and sudden Vengeance might, must indeed, have over-aw'd Men into a forc'd Compliance with their Duty; yet this had been no proper Trial of Creatures endow'd with an ingenuous Freedom; nor had there been much of Virtue in such their Obedience, wherein their natural Liberty,

Divine Providence justify'd.

213

berty, if not wholly superseded, had at least been over-born by a Degree of Violence hardly possible to be resisted. And it is not to be imagin'd, that a wise God would have created Man in Nature free, on purpose, as it were, to subject him, in his whole Conduct, to the Fetters of a fatal Necessity.

SERM.

VI.

Besides, such a rigorous and hasty Execution of Sinners, as we are now supposing, would have been flatly contrary to God's declar'd Will and Counsel, relating to Mankind. For no sooner had our first Parents sinned, and thereby forfeited the Title which God had given them to Happiness and Immortality, but that, in Compassion to them, and their Posterity included in them, he gave them the comfortable Promise of a *Messiah*, and enter'd into a second Covenant with them, the main Condition of which (on our Part) is unfeigned Repentance. This Condition we are frequently call'd upon in Scripture to perform : God's Prophets do most earnestly inculcate it : St. *John Baptist*, the Fore-runner of Christ, prepared the Way for his Kingdom by this Doctrine : In one Word, Repentance and Forgiveness is the very Doc-

The Procedure of

trine that the Saviour of the World himself preach'd, and left in charge to his Apostles to propagate through all Nations.

Since then Remission of Sins upon Repentance is the undoubted Privilege of the Covenant in Christ; since God demands the one of us, in order to confer the other upon us, it is plain, there must be a competent Time allow'd for our Probation and Recovery: Because otherwise the Promise of God, and this inestimable Privilege, would be of no Avail to us. But now, if Vengeance were always ready to lay hold on the Sinner, and dispatch him out of hand, it is as plain, there would be no place left for Repentance. And, at that Rate, all the pathetic Exhortations and Invitations to Repentance, so often reiterated in the Bible, had stood there to no purpose, Which is too harsh and impious a Thought to be entertain'd concerning the God of Truth, as well as Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice.

Wherefore I conclude, that such a Method of punishing Sinners, would have been unreasonable and impracticable: Because, admitting the Supposal, the World could not

have subsisted; or, if it could, Men would have been deprived of their natural Freedom, and constrain'd to be good against their Will; (which is in Truth scarce good at all) or else they would have been plung'd at once into irrecoverable Ruin, without the Opportunity or Possibility of repenting.

Whereas God's Patience in bearing with Sinners, and respiting the fatal Sentence, is fairly consistent with the Preservation of the World, and its good Government too, as we shall see clearly in the Sequel: And it is likewise accommodated to the Nature and State of Mankind, as they are free Agents, and upon their Probation; and no less to the Tenour of the Covenant of Grace, which leaves Room, and affords Time, for their Repentance. This therefore is the Procedure, that should seem to fall in exactly well with the truest Measures of Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice, acting together in perfect Harmony. But

(2.) This Point may be farther confirm'd and illustrated, from the several excellent Purposes, that are more effectually serv'd in

SERM.
VI.

this Method of proceeding, than perhaps otherwise they could be.

As for Instance first, this is the Method that keeps up the Virtues and Graces of good Men in constant Exercise, and greatly helps towards their Continuance and Improvement in Well-doing.

For if wicked Men were immediately snatch'd away upon the Commission of any Wickedness, and made to cease from the Face of the Earth; and good Men were to be left in full and quiet Possession of the World, without any Molestation from bad Neighbours, it may well be question'd, whether so much Ease, and Peace, and undisturb'd Enjoyment, would not be dangerous, and even hurtful to them. For Paradise seems to have been made only for a State of perfect Innocence: Our lapsed Nature plainly stands in need of Discipline, but cannot bear Indulgence: And such an indulgent Providence might be too liable to be abus'd, and minister Occasion, even in Good Men, to Security and Sloth; if not to a Fondness for this present World, and a Forgetfulness of that which is to come.

But

But since, by God's Permission, the Good and Bad live promiscuously together; since the former are often expos'd like Sheep in the midst of Wolves; since Treachery and Disimulation, Slandering and Backbiting, Oppression and Revenge are such busie Actors upon this Stage of Disorder, and make human Life so unquiet and unsafe, this, tho' sometimes a Vexation to Righteous Souls, helps to loosen their Affections from this Earth, and place them on Things above: This tries and strengthens their Faith, and fixes their Trust in God: This trains them up to Patience and Resignation, to Mortification and Self-denial; it purges off all their Dross, and makes them more Spiritual and Heavenly-minded, and fitter for the Fruition of Celestial Joys. And certainly that Method of dealing with Sinners in this World, must be most agreeable to Goodness, Wisdom and Justice, which contributes so much towards the exercising, refining, and perfecting God's own Elect.

And again, which is still more, this Method of Providence is not only beneficial to good Men, but even to the wicked: For as it gives them all Space for Repentance, so it makes

SERM.
VI.

makes them Monitors and Remembrancers to each other. It may indeed seem strange, that an impenitent Sinner should become a Teacher of that Righteousness, which he is not willing to learn: But 'tis no wonder at all, that one Sinner should be a Plague to another. For they all naturally are so; the Objects of their Lusts set them at eternal Odds; they are perpetually contending for Power, Wealth, and Honour; Envy, Supplanting, Overturning one another. And sometimes it so proves, that the very Sparks of this hot Contention afford them Light enough to discern, (especially when they are worsted by their Adversaries, and defeated of their Hopes) that the Fruit of these things is nothing but Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. And this seasonable Discovery of their Folly may (and by God's Grace often does) lead them to a Sense of their Sins, and help to recover them out of the Snare of the Devil.

Nay, it is observable, that to punish Sin by Sin, is one of the severest Scourges in God's Hand; and that which causes the most sensible Smart, and sometimes the deepest Compunction. Thus when *David* was punish'd

for

for his own Adultery and Murder by the Rebellion of his darling Son *Abfalom*, how was he abashed and confounded? * He fled away in great Consternation, he covered his Head, and went up by the Ascent of Mount *Olivet*, Weeping and Bare-foot: and when *Shimei* came forth to meet him at *Baburim*, and cursed still as he came, saying, *The Lord hath delivered thy Kingdom into the Hand of thy Son Abfalom; and behold thou art taken in thy Mischief, because thou art a bloody Man*—The Sense of his Guilt, and the Weight of God's Afflicting Hand, made him submit to the Indignity, and say patiently,—*So let him curse:—Behold my Son which came forth of my Bowels seeketh my Life, how much more may this Benjamite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him.* And thus, by the just Permission, and wise Direction of a good God, Sin very sharply and effectually corrects Sin; and one Man's Disease proves another Man's Cure.

It is further remarkable, that the Designs and Attempts of wicked Men, even when seemingly conniv'd at by Providence, and suffer'd most to prosper, have the more eminent-ly

MRES
VI.

2 Sam.
ch. xv. and
xvi.

SERM.
VI.

ly conduc'd to God's Glory, and the Good of Mankind. Thus the unnatural Cruelty and Revenge of *Joseph's* Brethren, though proceeding from the worst Intention on their Part, was by God *meant for Good*; and he was thereby put in a Capacity of harbouring and supporting his aged Father, and the whole Family in their Distress, and saving *much People alive*: And this was preparatory to a long Train of Wonders, by which their Posterity were attended and conducted, out of *Egypt*, through the Wilderness, into the Land of *Canaan*. Thus the Dispersions and Captivities of the *Israelites* afterward, especially their long Captivity in *Babylon*, help'd to spread the Knowledge of the true God far and wide, and to make his Name and Power confess'd among the Heathens, which gradually prepar'd the World for the Reception of the *Messiah* in the Fulness of God's due Time. Thus the violent Persecution of the Christian Religion, tho' levell'd at its Extirpation, became (through the invincible Fortitude and Patience of the Martyrs) a most glorious Testimony to its Truth and Excellency, and the marvellous Means of its more abundant Encrease. And

so in many other Instances besides, both of a publick and private Nature, the wicked Devices of Mens Hearts have been made subservient to God's establish'd Counsel, and to very unexpected Turns of Providence, quite contrary to the Intention of such evil Instruments.

And doubtless, that Forbearance of Sinners, which is not only calculated (as was shewn before) for the common Benefit both of Good and Bad Men, but also productive of much unthought of Good besides, and conducing to the fuller Display of God's Glory, must be adjusted according to the exactest Measures of Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice. There can no possible Doubt remain of this, if we consider,

(3.) That which we cannot but discern, viz. That there is a sufficient Discouragement to Sin, notwithstanding God's Patience and Long-suffering towards Sinners.

For when all is done, there is no such thing as Ease, or Peace, or Safety, for the wicked. Guilt will sit hard upon the Mind, and fill it with ill-boding Thoughts, and frightful Apprehensions. And the very Expectation of Vengeance to ensue, is itself a present, and a grievous

SERM.
VI.

grievous Torment. And this is so much the Effect of natural Conscience, that the Heathens themselves had a feeling Sense of it, and give us very affecting Descriptions of the troublesome Inmate.

Platarch sets it forth by an Illustration, which (by the way, gives Light to a Passage in Scripture relating to our Blessed Saviour—

“ *Every Malefactor, says he, that suffers*

“ *bodily Execution, carries out his own Cross:*

“ But, Wickedness is the skilful Artificer, that

“ of itself both furnishes and frames the Instru-

“ ments of its own Misery; Shame, Fear, Re-

“ morse, and never-ceasing Perturbation and

“ Distraction. † And *Tacitus* imagines, that

“ if the Breast of Tyrants could be laid open,

“ we might see them full of Lashes and Gashes,

“ the Mind being as liable to be mangled

“ and torn by Cruelty, Lust, and evil

“ Machinations, as the Body is by the

“ Stripes of a Whip. * And *Juvenal*

“ the Poet won't allow so much as the

“ Thought, that those Men escape with

“ Impunity, who are left under the secret

* *Platarch. Loc. supra citat. p. 559.*

† *Tacitus, Annal. Lib. vi.*

* *Juvenal. Satyr. xiii. 192, &c.*

"Terror and Scourge of a guilty Mind, a
"Tormenter deaf to all Entreaty. And
all the grave Heathen Writers concur in the
same Sentiments. Now if such be the Hor-
ror of Guilt, as reflected from the Glass of
meer natural Conscience, much more must
it be, when awaken'd and heighten'd by the
Threatnings of that God, who is *greater*
than our Hearts, and knoweth all Things. So
that in good Truth, the Sinner doth not go
unpunished, when he is left in his own
Hands; because, as long as he carries a con-
scious Mind about him, he is sure to do se-
vere Execution upon himself.

But besides, God's temporal Judgments are
very frequently executed upon incorrigible
Sinners; so frequently, that it is enough to
convince the boldest of them all, that there is
no Security in Sin. And sometimes they are
so visibly mark'd with the very Character of
those Sins for which they were inflicted, that
they cannot but extort the Confession of such
as are immediately concern'd, and command
the awful Regard of others.

So the cruel *Adonibezek* read his Crime in
his Punishment, and said, *Threescore and ten*
Kings,

SERM.
VI.

Kings, having their Thumbs and their great Toes cut off, gathered their Meat under my Table: As I have done, so God hath requited me. So the haughty Haman, in plotting the Destruction of Mordecai and the whole People of the Jews, became most unexpectedly the Author and Procurer of his own Downfal and their Establishment. So the vain Herod was eaten with Worms alive, and perish'd in a more miserable Manner than other Mortals, because he receiv'd the blasphemous Applauses of the People, and gave not God the Glory. So the Arch-Apostate Julian, being mortally wounded by an Arrow from an unseen Hand, died with a Vicisti Galilæe in his Mouth; owning with Rage and Despair, that the Saviour, whom he had renounc'd, derided, and defied, was now his Avenger and Destroyer.

And, beside these extraordinary Examples, it is Matter of common Observation, made good by numberless Events, that bloody-minded Tyrants seldom die an unbloody Death; that Murder seldom passes undiscover'd or unreveng'd; that the Oppressor and Extortioner, who is so greedy of Gain, trou-

bleth

bleth his own House, and inherits but the Wind
— an Estate that is hardly capable of
Settlement or Entail—and so in many o-
ther like Cases. Daring and presumptuous
Sinners therefore are so far from being ex-
empt from God's temporal Judgments, that
they are in perpetual Danger of them.

But, however it may fare with them here,
Beloved, (I use St. Peter's Words to you) *be*
not ignorant of this one Thing, that one Day is
with the Lord as a thousand Years, and a
thousand Years as one Day. The Lord is not
slack concerning his Promise, [no, nor yet his
Threats] as some Men count Slackness, but is
long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any
should perish, but that all should come to Re-
pentance. But if Men will continue obsti-
nately impenitent, their *Damnation* neither
slumbreth nor *lingreth*: It is but a Moment
of Time, (nothing in God's Account, no-
thing in Comparison of what is to follow)
and they shall enter upon a vast Eternity,
which no Numbers can reckon, nor Con-
ception reach; an Eternity of Torments,
Torments such as no Heart can endure to
think of, no Hope can mitigate, and nothing

SERM.

VI.

can prevent but a timely Repentance. For which Repentance, though there is a Space allowed to the Sinner in this Life, yet it cannot be denied, if any Sense of Misery or Dread of Danger can affect Men, that Sin is sufficiently discouraged, by the cruel Pangs of a guilty Conscience, by the frequent Execution of God's exemplary Vengeance in this World, and the *fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation* in that which is to come. Which compleatly demonstrates, what I propos'd, that there is a most admirable Temperature of Goodness, Wisdom, and Justice, in this whole Procedure.

II. As consequent upon this, I should now shew, that it is a very unjust Objection to a very kind Providence, to imagine that God's Patience and Forbearance is any Encouragement to sin; and a most grievous Abuse for Sinners to make it so.

But this is so direct, and so necessary a Consequence from the former Proposition, that I need not spend Words or Time to enforce it. For if the whole Procedure be so perfectly agreeable to all the truest Measures of Goodness, Wisdom and Justice, as I have

prov'd by divers Reasons, by one in particular (which was the last insisted on) that directly precludes this Objection; then it must be a notorious Abuse for Sinners, either to think, or act so unreasonably and perversely.

One would hardly imagine it possible indeed, that any Sinner in his right Wits should object against Providence for want of strict Justice; when 'tis plain, if Things were otherwise, he might much more reasonably complain for want of that Mercy, the Benefit of which he now enjoys, or may at least, if he do not neglect it.

But, as God's infinite Holiness makes it impossible that he could, so it is downright absurd to think that he should spare Sinners, in such manner as to encourage them in their Sins, and lull them asleep in Security; when at the same Time, he hath taken abundant Care to lay all possible Restraints upon them, that do not violate their natural Freedom; and to awaken them by the Checks and Menaces of their own Consciences, by the Terror of his temporal Judgments, and the much more terrible Denunciation of eternal Punishment.

SERM.
VI.

And it is certainly the most preposterous Abuse of God's unmerited Goodness, for Men to construe it so much to his Dishonour, and force it, as it were, to minister to their own Presumption. When he is pleas'd to spare and to forbear, to wait for their Repentance and invite them to it, it is both Ingratitude and Insolence to conclude from hence, that he is a tame and easy Being, that may be insulted at Pleasure; and therefore to sin against him with an high Hand, and cast his Laws contemptuously behind their Backs. It is Madness to forget that God is just, because his Justice is temper'd with Mercy; it is senseless not to consider, that to trespass upon infinite Goodness and Clemency is the most provoking Aggravation of Sin, and will at last be recompens'd with a proportionable Punishment, that will be still encreasing as the Guilt encreases.

Vain is it then, for any presumptuous Sinners to think, that they *shall escape the Judgment of God*: Most wretchedly vain, to *despise the Riches of his Goodness and Forbearance*, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth them to Repentance; but, after the Hardness of their impenitent Hearts, *treasuring up to them-*

themselves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God. If any can be so ignorant, their Ignorance is grossly affected, or stupid; if any so harden'd, their Obstinacy, it is to be fear'd, is incurable; if any so desperate, their Punishment, sooner or later, will be intolerable.

III. I come now, in the last place, to intimate what Construction and Use Men, in Reason and Conscience, ought to make of such God's Dispensations; which I shall consider with a particular Regard to ourselves, and the present Conjunction.

I. And first, in framing a Judgment upon such the Dispensations of Providence, this should be an establish'd Rule, that how long soever wicked Men may be suffer'd, or how prosperous soever Wickedness may seem to be, it ought not to be Matter of Scandal to us, nor tempt us to charge God foolishly. This Rule is given us by the Royal Preacher himself, Eccles. v. 8. *If thou seest the Oppression of the Poor, and violent perverting of Judgment and Justice in a Province; marvel not at the Matter: For he that is higher than the highest regardeth, and there be higher than they.*

SERM.
VI.

And whenever these or any the like Enormities are permitted, tho' they are such as do much disturb the Quiet, and undermine the Safety of Societies, and therefore might seem to require the speedier Regulation; -yet we may perfectly rest ourselves upon this Assurance, that they are all under the Governance and Restraint of God's over-ruling Power, and the Inspection of his all-piercing Eye: Which, even whilst it seemeth to wink at them, is narrowly watching them; and that too, 'tis most probable, in order to their severer Punishment. But however, since God is a vigilant Observer of these and all others the Iniquities he permits, it ought to be a firm and standing Conclusion with us, that such his Permission of Sinners is founded upon weighty Reasons; which tho' not presently obvious even to our serious Enquiries, much less to our vain Curiosity, must always be presumed to be right worthy of himself, and conducive to the great Ends of his providential Government.

What then, tho' Oppression and Persecution be sometimes suffer'd to trample upon the Necks of the Innocent and Helpless? What, tho'

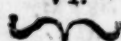
Divine Providence justify'd.

231

SERM.
VI.

tho' Tyranny be sometimes permitted, like a *strong Man rejoycing to run a Race*, to make mad Havock where it sways, and bear down all Law and Liberty with Violence? What, tho' the Ambition of Princes be sometimes cast as a Firebrand among the Nations, to set the Affairs of the World and the whole Course of Nature, as it were, all in a Combustion? Are not all these Scourges in the Hand of God? And is it any Wonder, that he should employ such willing Messengers on his own Errand, and send Rapaciousness, Pride, and Cruelty, to visit for Profaneness, carnal Security, and Hypocrisy? And can God want to be justified, is he not sufficiently clear when he judgeth, whoever they be, that are ordain'd to feel the Weight of his Judgments, or employ'd to be the Instruments of inflicting them?

We of this Nation have been subjected to the Alarms and Terrors, to the doubtful Contingencies and Events, to the certain and vast Expence of Blood and Treasure, that must of Necessity attend a tedious War; I say, (excepting the short Interval of an insidious Peace) we have been subjected to these Calamities of War for near twenty Years together:

SERM.
VI.

For War, be it never so just and honourable, is still more or less calamitous, and ought ever to be reckon'd among the Judgments of God. But we can easily account to ourselves for all that we have suffer'd under it; and we must in all Humility confess, that God is just in visiting us with this Judgment, such a sinful People as we are, even tho' we should take the Liberty to suppose our Enemies to be much greater Sinners than ourselves. For, as an Excess of Guilt in them is no Proof of our Innocence; so on the other Hand, their Forwardness to become the Instruments of annoying us, is no Security to them, that they themselves shall not be destroyed: For so were the *Israelites* of old often and sore distress'd by those very idolatrous Nations that were themselves devoted to Destruction.

And if the Enemy with whom we are chiefly engag'd, should still blindly persist in his Hatred against us, and impotently drive on his furious Designs, now that Providence so plainly seems to have stopp'd his Career, may we not probably expect to see all the Enterprizes of an aspiring Reign concluded in his shameful and total Overthrow? At least, may

we

we not hope to see this *Leviathan*, (*the King*
over all the Children of Pride) who hath so
long sported himself in the Ruin of his Neigh-
bours, and fatten'd upon the Spoils of Nations;
may we not hope to see him forc'd to dis-
gorge his Prey, to give up his unjust Acqui-
sitions, to revoke the Titles of Royalty he
hath so vainly bestow'd, and to sue at last for
an inglorious Peace, such as may for evermore
bind up his Hands from troubling the Repose,
or attempting the Liberties of *Europe*? And,
if our own great Unworthiness do not hinder,
doth not the happy *Crisis* seem now to be near
approaching, when we may actually rejoice
to see the long Arrears of Vengeance for Ra-
pine and Bloodshed paid, where they are most
due; and be excited, in a grateful Sense of our
own Deliverance, to say with the *Psalmist*,
Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous,
Verily he is a God that judgeth in the Earth?
Oh! that we may but be found righteous e-
nough to render us capable of so great a Bless-
ing!

2dly. And this is the proper Use that
Men ought always to make of such God's
Dispensations, *i. e.* to turn unto the Lord
with

with their whole Heart, and flee from his Wrath into the Arms of his Mercy. For the Continuance of Favours undeserv'd, and the Suspension of deserved Judgments, is at once a kind Invitation, and a startling Summons, to Repentance, which not to hearken to must argue the utmost Pitch of Ingratitude and Perverseness.

And certainly, if ever any Nation or Generation of Men were so graciously invited and summon'd to repent, or so patiently waited for, *We* are that Nation and Generation:—*We* that have been so often spar'd when we might most justly have been punish'd: *We* that have been sometimes encompass'd with Dangers, and alarm'd with Judgments, hanging directly over our Heads, and just ready to fall upon us with all their Weight, and yet deliver'd by God's out-stretched Arm: *We* that have had so many Mercies multiplied upon us, so many mighty Works done for us, as might have converted a Nation of Heathens, and brought them long e'er now prostrate upon their Faces, repenting in Sackcloth and Ashes. And if, after all these repeated Calls, *We* can still continue uncircum-

is'd both in Heart, and Ears, surely we must have put off all Sense of Shame and Fear, we must be the most abandon'd of all People, we must be entirely given up to an incorrigible Hardness of Heart.

And, if we are not already under that fatal Induration, it is doubtless high Time to be-
think ourselves, that Mercy abus'd, 'till it be incens'd, will admit of no Intercessor; and that Vengeance, long delay'd but still provok'd, will come upon us like a Fury at last, not to correct but to consume us.

If therefore we have any true Sense of Liberty, any just Dread of arbitrary Power, let us instantly shake off that heavy Yoke of Bondage, which our tyrannical Lusts have laid upon us: If we have any Regard to our own Safety, let us break off from our Iniquities, which will otherwise be our Ruin: If we have any Reverence for God's holy Name, any real Aversion to Popery, any Value for his true Religion establish'd among us, let us resolve to revive it both in Profession and Practice; let us agree, with one Mind, and one Mouth, zealously to defend it; let us study to adorn it by an irreproachable Life and Conversation.

SERM.
VI.

variation. And that the Reformation may be general and effectual, let us, all of us, High and Low, Teacher and Scholar, Magistrates, Ministers, and People, join Hand and Heart in this necessary Work: Let us, before all Things, renounce, and, as much as in us lyes, rebuke and restrain that Spirit of Infidelity and Profaneness which vaunts itself so publickly, and defies all the Hosts of the living God; and let us endeavour to cast out that Spirit of Indifferency and Remissness too, that has been creeping upon us for some Time by unperceiv'd Degrees, and has already in a great Measure benumm'd our spiritual Sense; and let us for ever *lay aside all Malice, and all Guile, and Hypocrisies, and Envies, and all Evil-speakings*, which cause us, either to nauseate *the sincere Milk of the Word*, or thro' an ill Digestion to turn even our best Nutriment into Poison.

To be impartial, that no accursed Thing may separate between us and our God, nor obstruct our perfect Reconciliation, let us search every one into the very Bottom of our Hearts, and tear from thence those Bosom-Sins, that make us at once disloyal Members both to
Church

Church and State. And where Licentiousness has made the widest Breach, there let us be sure to apply our speediest Care, and oppose the strongest Bank; particularly against that Looseness of Opinion that slides so easily into Practice, that removes every Check to Vice, and hath let in universal Corruption among us; that Intemperance which overflows us like a Deluge; that Softness and Lewdness which emasculates and enfeebles our Youth, and hath almost quench'd all the remaining Sparks of Virtue and Bravery; and (which of all Things must not be forgotten) that most immoderate Degree of Uncharitableness and Bitterness, which estranges our Hearts from each other, and whets our Tongues like Swords, and hath carried our Dissensions to such an amazing Height, as makes the Heart of every true Lover of his Queen and Country bleed with Grief, and quake for Fear.

In sum, let us set ourselves to mortify and subdue all our fleshly Lusts, as this holy Season of *Lent*, and this solemn Occasion, do both require. For, *whence come Wars and Fightings among you, (says St James) come they not hence, even from your Lusts that war within*

SERM.
VI.

within your Members? This is the natural Solution of all that Variance, Emulation, and Sedition, with which we are so divided, and distracted: Pride, that arrogant Usurper; Ambition, that desperate Climber; Covetousness, that hasty Gatherer; Luxury, that prodigal Consumer; and Envy, that perpetual Murmurer; these, these are the Troublers of our *Israel*, these are the Incendiaries that set all on fire. Let us therefore withdraw the Fuel that feeds these raging Lusts, that they may no longer burn inwardly to our great Disquiet, nor ever flame out to our Confusion and Destruction; let us *study all to be quiet* and *mind every one his own Business* in his proper Station; let us not be *wise in our own Concoits*, nor *mind high Things*, but *with brotherly Love in Honour prefer one another*. And let this be the only, but the noble Strife, among Brethren and Countrymen, who shall do most Good to the Publick; and who shall serve their Queen and Country with the most disinterested Zeal, and uncorrupted Fidelity.

And, for a Conclusion of all, let us, as *St Paul* exhorts, put up our *Prayers, Supplications, Intercessions and Thanksgivings*, for the Queen,

Divine Providence justify'd.

239

SERM.
VI.

Queen, and all that are in Authority, that
we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all
Godliness and Honesty; that we may never want
the Shelter of their kind Protection, nor they
the lawful Tribute of our Obedience and Sub-
mission; that the Queen's Empire may be
firmly seated in the Hearts of all her People,
and the People's Duty solidly founded both
upon Principle and Affection: That Religion
(the best Guardian of civil Society) may sea-
son all our Counsels, and prosper all our Un-
dertakings; that Mercy may distil upon us as
the Dew, and Righteousness run down as the
Waters; that Probity and Equity may be the
Standard of our Proceedings; that Know-
ledge and Wisdom may be the Stability of our
Times, and Union and Concord the Cement
of our Government; and that the glorious
Successes of War may be speedily compleated
in a happy Peace, never to be eluded by any
Art, nor disturb'd by any Violence; and lastly
(to crown all our Wishes) that all the Blessings
we have been so gallantly contending for,
may be transmitted safe to Posterity, and
that (according to the wise Provision of our
Legi-

SERM.
VI.

Legislature) a Race of Protestants may never fail to sway the *British* Scepter, as long as the Sun and Moon endure. *Amen*: And let all the People say, *Amen*,



A SER-

never
g as
d let

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at the

A S S I Z E S

Holden at

KINGSTON upon THAMES,

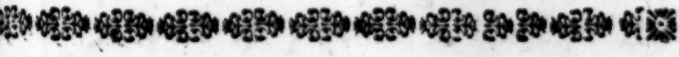
On *Wednesday* 30th of *July*, 1712.

Before the Right Honourable the

Lord Chief Justice PARKER,

And the Honourable

Mr. Justice TRACEY.



been all thought fit to insert a notice
Notice, that, in my humble Opinion
could never deserve. The Subjett of it is
is fit, relative to prejudic'd Reason, and

R

R 2

The President of, &c.

Legislature (or other) of the State of New York, may
and as such, the said Legislature, as long

as the said Legislature, shall be in session

A

MEMORIAL

Presented at the

ASSIZES

Held at

KINGSTON upon THAMES

On Wednesday 20th of July 1710

Before the Right Honourable the

Lord Chief Justice PARKER

And the Honourable

Mr. Justice TRACY.

That the said

R



To the Worshipful

JOHN MITCHEL, Esq;

HIGH SHERIFF of the County of **SURRY,**

And to the Gentlemen of the **GRAND-JURY** of
the said County.

The Honourable Heneage	} Knights of the Shire.	William Newland, Esq;
Finch, Esq;		George Meggot, Esq;
Sir Francis Vincent, Bar ^t .		James Titchborn, Esq;
Sir James Clarke, Knight.		John Pettward, Esq;
Edward Nicholas, Esq;		William Salmon, Esq;
Edward Harvey, Esq;		Thomas Williams, Esq;
William Draper, Esq;		William Overman, Esq;
George Vernon, Esq;		Laurence Parker, Esq;
Thomas Lant, Esq;		Richard Oldner, Gent.
Edward Thurland, Esq;		John Angell, Gent.

GENTLEMEN,

THIS Sermon was intended only as
a small Piece of Service to the
High Sheriff, which he was pleas'd
to over-rate by a great deal, even
in the Account of private Friendship: But
you have all thought fit to honour it with a
publick Notice, that, in my humble Opinion,
it could never deserve. The Subject of it in-
deed is so agreeable to unprejudic'd Reason, and

D E D I C A T I O N.

so familiar to Mens inward Sense, that it must
for ever approve itself to every generous, can-
did and honest Mind: And, I am persuaded,
your entire Approbation of the Subject itself
must be that which led you insensibly into the
good liking of an honest, but imperfect, Dis-
course upon it: Which therefore (tho' conscious
enough of the great Disadvantages under which
it appears) I submit to your Pleasure, and
commit to your Protection; being only ambi-
tious, that my Compliance in this particular
may pass for a real Testimony of that, which
I am very willing to publish to the World,
viz. the just Esteem and Honour I have for
Persons of such Eminent Worth and Loyalty.
I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

R. Mofs

SERMON VII.

MATTH. VII. 12.

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets.

THE Connexion of these words is perhaps more difficult to be traced than needful to be enquired after. It may suffice, that it is a part of our Lord's most divine Sermon on the Mount, which consists chiefly of so many entire Precepts; and those, as it should seem, for the most part promiscuously set down, without any exact Order, or strict Coherence one with another.

And probably the Particle *Therefore*, which stands

SERM.
VII.

stands at the Head of this Text, is rather Transitive than Illative; it rather leads on to a new Subject, than refers back to any thing preceding. And the Subject it leads to is such as might well deserve a Place in this Heavenly Discourse, without being introduced by way of Inference, from any other Doctrine or Precept. For it is itself a first principle in Reason and Morality, and therefore fitly made the invariable Standard of Equity by our Supreme Lawgiver. *Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them : for this is the Law and the Prophets.* That is to say, " This is not only pursuant " to Nature's Law, but exactly conformable " to the Law of *Moses*, as it was anciently " and authentically interpreted by the Prophets, and as it is now restor'd to its genuine Meaning, and carried up to its just pitch of Perfection by me, who am much more than a Prophet, even the only begotten Son of God.

In prosecuting this Subject, I shall (1st) state the Rule or Precept of the Text, and set it in its proper Light. (2^{dly}.) I shall enquire into the general Ground and Reason of

it, as it a Law of Nature; and the special Obligation of it, as it is a Law of instituted Religion. (3^{dly}.) I shall consider how far its just Extent reaches. (4^{thly}.) I shall shew how applicable it is to all the good Uses and Purposes for which it was intended, and how well calculated to serve the Interests of Mankind, when duly so applied.

I. I shall state the Rule or Precept of the Text, and set it in its proper Light.

(1.) In order to which be it observed first, that the Rule as it is here expressed in the Affirmative, *All things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them*, is to be understood of all that *Good* which we naturally desire for our selves. For, *who will shew us any Good?* is the Voice that expresses the very Cravings of Nature. It is *Good*, that we not only earnestly covet, but justly claim, when Reason guides our Passion aright in the Pursuit of our real Interest. And the same *Good* consequently we also should be willing to afford to others in their turn, who certainly have in Nature as much right to it, as pas-

SERM.
VII.

fionate a Love for it, as we our selves can have.

(2.) It is withal to be observ'd, that though the Rule is expressed in the affirmative only, yet is the negative necessarily included; namely, that whatsoever we would *not*, *i. e.* whatsoever *Evil* we would *not*, that Men should do to us, neither should we do the like unto them. For the same Principle of Self-love that makes Men so eagerly desirous of *Good*, gives them as strong an Aversion against *Evil*. And the same equitable Reason that obliges us to do all that *Good* to others, which we our selves might fairly expect in like Circumstances, will much more oblige us to refrain from doing any *Evil* to them; which were the Case our own, we should think much to receive at their Hands. Because that which binds to more, doth undoubtedly bind to less: And it is manifestly a less Degree of Good-will towards Men, barely to abstain from doing them that *Evil* which we ought not, than freely to do them that *Good* which we ought.

(3.) It may further be observed, that the Rule thus explained, as including both the affirmative and the negative, gives us the full Sense and Import of that great Commandment.

mandment. *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self*: And it is therefore in its Application, the adequate Measure of all Justice and all Charity, of every thing that comes under the Notion of Duty towards our Neighbour. For he that is ready with all Alacrity to do all that *Good* to others, which he himself, placed in the same Circumstances, might in reason demand from them: And he that is scrupulously tender of doing any kind of *Evil* to others, which he changing the Situation of Affairs again, might well think a Hardship to himself: That Man, I say, does apparently measure his Affection towards his Neighbour, by the very same Respect and Care that he hath for himself; which is, to all Intents and Purposes, *to love him as himself*. And whosoever is thus cordially affected towards his Neighbour, cannot be wanting in any Office of Justice or Charity that is due unto him; inasmuch as *Love* (Love so grounded and so governed) *is the fulfilling of the Law*. For as the Man who loves himself (which Nature prompts us all to do) cannot reasonably be supposed, either to wish and design *Evil* for himself, or not to wish and design *Good* for himself;

SERM.
VII.

self; so, if he makes Self-love the equal Standard of that which he bears to others, he will not, he cannot offer that Wrong to them, of which he hath a natural Abhorrence himself; nor withhold that *Good* from them, which were his dear self concerned, he would naturally and vehemently desire.

4.) To prevent any wild or wilful Mistake in this Matter, it ought always to be observ'd and remembred, that though it is natural to us to abhor that which is *Evil*, and to covet that which is *Good* for our selves, yet is it possible for Nature to be extremely debauched, and Reason in a manner deposed, and for unreasonable and unnatural Appetite to usurp the Government of the Man. And in this Case most assuredly *Good* will be called *Evil*, and *Evil* *Good*: But the Nature of things will remain unchanged, though their Names may be arbitrarily varied. For instance, a Man may, by addicting himself to excessive drinking, contract an intemperate and insatiable Thirst; and measuring others by his own Greediness or Capacity, he may, and will probably, urge them to the same degree of Excess, that is become, even against Nature, habitual and delightful

delightful to himself; and in so doing, it is very sure he does just as he would be done by. And yet it were absurd to imagine, that such a disorderly Companion walks by the equitable Rule of the Text. And therefore the Rule is manifestly to be construed, not of depraved Will as it is hurried on by inordinate Appetite, but of the Will as it is, or ought to be, regularly guided by the Dictates of simple Nature and sober Reason.

(5.) It will be proper moreover to observe, that this Rule is never so to be interpreted, as to confound the natural Order of Things, and the mutual Relations betwixt Man and Man, which it aims chiefly to confirm and settle upon a true Foundation. And therefore the respective Duties hence arising, are not to be look'd upon as the same in kind, but only in proportion. As for example, It cannot be supposed by vertue of this Rule, that the Father is obliged to pay all that Reverence and Obedience to his Son, which the Son reciprocally owes to his Father; for this would plainly invert the Order of Nature: But he is certainly obliged to shew all that paternal Affection to his Child, which he himself either experienc'd

SERM.
VII.

experienc'd, or might have justly expected from his Father before him: For *This* is to do proportionably, as he was willing when the Case was his own, that others should do unto him.

(6.) It is very material to observe, that this Rule is ever so to be understood, as may make it fairly to consist with all other our respective Obligations; and in particular, with the Exercise of publick Authority, and that wholesome Discipline which is necessary to support the same. For Example again; It is a Decree as ancient as *Noah*, and adopted, I believe, into the Laws of all civilized Nations, that *Whofo sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed.* And though there is no Judge who passes Sentence upon a Murderer, but would be naturally as desirous of Life, as that Murderer can be, were he himself liable to the same Sentence; yet in this Case, the Fact once prov'd, he is not so much as at Liberty to shew Pity. For *he is the Minister of God* and his Vicegerent, and is under a superior Obligation to both, not to *bear the Sword in vain*, but to *execute Wrath* upon such a notorious Evil-doer, who hath no longer a Right to take Shelter under this Law of Humanity, because

he

he hath violated it in the most outrageous manner, and deserves the Severity of Justice for so doing. Nor is it a thing conceivable, that the Magistrate, in executing Vengeance upon such a flagrant Transgressor of this Law, should himself, for that very Reason, become an Offender against it; for *That* would suppose the Law to defeat and destroy it self, and at the same time to cut asunder the Nerves of all Discipline and all Government; which is too grossly absurd to be supposed of a Law, that carries, not only all the Marks of natural Prudence and Equity upon it, but also the undoubted Stamp of Divine Authority. Having therefore thus stated the Rule or Precept of the Text, and placed it in a proper Light, the next thing in Order is,

II. To enquire into the general Ground and Reason of it, as it is a Law of Nature; and the special Obligation of it, as it is a Law of instituted Religion.

(1.) And, in the first Place, that it is the Dictate of unenlightned Nature, is indisputably clear, not so much from the private Sentiments

SERM.
VII.

perfect Strangers to Revelation, (though such are not wanting) as to the universal Sense and Reason of Mankind, which cannot but give Suffrage to it, when not extremely biaſſed or diſtorted by Paſſion. Make any Man the Judge, who is not perfectly ſavage, even though he never heard of *Mofes* and the Prophets, or of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, yet will he immediately diſcern the Equity and Reaſonableneſs of this natural Principle by its own Light: And, if he chance to ſee the Innocent violently oppreſſed, or the Unfortunate barbarouſly inſulted over, he will be ready to cry out, even with an air of Authority, to the inhuman Perſecutor, Fie for ſhame! Would you be glad to be ſo ſerv'd your ſelf? Do, in the name of *Juſtice* do, but what you would be done unto.

And that what is thus univerſally agreeable to unprejudic'd Reaſon has the Sanction of a Law is evident at firſt Sight; becauſe there is a natural Penalty annex'd to it, which the Tranſgreſſors of it are ſure to be made ſenſible of as ſoon as they come to themſelves: For there is no Man, who hath not wholly diveſted

himſelf

himself of Humanity, but whose Conscience SERM.
VII. will condemn and punish him too, for being treacherous, or ungrateful, or cruel, to his Brother, when once that Passion is allayed which tempted him to commit the Iniquity: And that there is Iniquity committed, that some Law is actually transgressed, the Self-condemnation attending upon such Actions is Indication sufficient.

And we need not seek far for the original Ground and Reason of this Law: For, if we consider it, we shall soon find, that it results immediately from the very Frame of our Nature, and the Condition of human Life, inasmuch as all Men are sent into the World with well nigh equal Necessities and equal Capacities: Our Necessities are such as make us mutually dependent one on another; and our Capacities are such as enable us to be mutually helpful and serviceable: And both these Considerations join'd together do at once dispose and constrain Men to enter into Society, the Cement of which Society becomes as strong as the Necessity that gives rise to it; and the Comforts enjoyed in it (and not to be enjoyed without it) are so many reciprocal Engagements

SERM.

VII.

inviolably to uphold and maintain it. And being thus framed, as we are, for Society, and thus happily combined together in it, it must unavoidably follow, that what is good for one Man would equally be good for another placed in the same Circumstances; and that what is evil for one would be no less evil for another when so placed: And consequently there is equal *Reason* for all Men to do that (and that only) unto every Man, which they in a like Case might judge reasonable that others should do unto them.

And this *Reason* must have the binding Force and Authority of a Law, because the same wise and sovereign Providence that formed Men sociable Creatures, and ranged them together in Society, hath also, by vertue of this providential Appointment, as well as the natural Course of Things, made this equitable Practice the necessary Means of maintaining that Society in Peace and good Order.

And this Law, it cannot be denied, is sufficiently promulged, because it is so legibly and so deeply engraven upon the Hearts of all Men, that it hath been universally acknowledged and approved, and will for ever ap-

prove

prove itself to natural Reason and Conscience :
Into this therefore we resolve it, as it is a
Branch of the Law of Nature.

(2.) Let us next see wherein the special
Obligation of it consists, as it is a Law of
Instituted Religion : For such, without all
Question, it is according to the Jewish as well
as Christian Institution. The *Levitical Law*
says expressly, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as
thyself*, (Levit. xix.) and that well-regulated
Affection is the Root from which this Rule
of Practice naturally grows : And we have
the negative Part of the Rule itself in the
Book of *Tobit*, (Ch. iv.) *Do that to no Man
which thou hatest*, which shews it at least to
be a Maxim received among the *Jews*. But
what Need of farther Testimony? since our
blessed Lord himself, at the Time when
he stamp'd it anew with the Impress of his
own Authority, declares it to be no other
than the very *Law and the Prophets*, i. e. the
genuine Result of all that *Moses* in his Law,
and the Prophets, as his Interpreters, had taught
concerning the natural Duties of Justice and
Mercy : By us, therefore, who are Christians,
ought to be embraced as a most sacred Law

SERM.
VII.

of our Religion; a Law derived from the highest Source both of Antiquity and Authority, and bound upon us by the very strongest Bonds of ingenuous Obedience; the special Enforcements of which do arise chiefly from two Considerations.

First, From the common Relation we bear to one God and Father; and from his express Authority intervening to require our Obedience to this Law, back'd with a condescending Example to excite us to it, and guide us in performing it.

For if our natural Equality, and the mutual Dependence we have upon each other, according to the Dispositions of Providence, be a natural Reason, sufficient to oblige us *to do to all Men, as we would that they should do unto us*, then certainly the Sense we ought always to have of our absolute Dependence upon God, as the Maker and Preserver of us all, is a religious Reason of much more Force to bind us to the strictest Observance of this Duty: Especially if we consider, that we are not left to deduce *this* ourselves from the bare Intendment of God's Providence, clear and easy as that Deduction is; but we have it pro-

posed

posed to us as the most explicate and solemn Declaration of his Will, and that too expounded (lest possibly we should still pervert his Meaning) by the most gracious and instructive Example: For we are required to be *merciful as God is merciful, and perfect as he is perfect*; and we are informed at the same Time, that *he maketh his Sun to rise on the good and on the evil, that he sendeth his Rain on the just and unjust*: If therefore we would approve ourselves the Children of our Father which is in Heaven, the Rule of Perfection that prescribes to our Imitation must be, not to do to others just as they have done to us, (which is the narrow Measure of Peevishness and Partiality) but generously and piously to do, for God's sake, all that Good, however undeserv'd, to others, which we ourselves should expect from them, not considering our own Desert; nay, in Truth, which we have received, and do hope to receive, notwithstanding our great Demerit, at the Hand of God. Again, the Enforcement of the Christian's Obligation to this Duty gathers new Strength from our mutual Union and Fellowship in Christ, and from his *New Commandment*

SERM.
VII.

of loving one another after his own most inviting Pattern.

For if the natural Alliance of Men, or their politick Combination one with another, be a good Reason to bind them interchangeably to all the good Offices of Humanity and Love, then doubtless their spiritual Kindred in Christ, and their Incorporation into that heavenly Society, his Church, must be a much nearer and closer Tie, and much more engaging and endearing: For Christians are represented in Scripture, as being *one Body under one Head, the Lord Jesus, and every one Members one of another*. And as it would be unnatural in the Members of the same Body not to administer to one another according to their respective Functions, not to have a Fellow-feeling both in the Sense of Pain and Pleasure, not to bear with each other's Infirmities, and supply, as much as possible, each other's Defects; so, and much worse, would it be for Christians not to have the most intimate Communication together, and the tenderest Concern for each other, not to delight to do all the Good to others, that every one, in a like Case, might reasonably look for himself; not to refrain with Abhor-

rence

rence from doing the least imaginable Evil to others, that any one, so circumstanced, might justly think a Grievance; and it would be the more monstrous in Christians to be otherwise affected, because Love is the Band of their mystical Union in Christ, the Spirit of Love is the very Life of the Body; with which that it might be fulfilled, our Lord hath pathetically inculcated the Duty in a peculiar Precept; and that Precept at once heightened and sweetened by that most marvellous Instance of compassionate Love which he himself manifested in the Redemption of the World: For Christ loved us, when we were Enemies both to him and to ourselves; he laid down his Life for us in the Abundance of his Love, even when we were in a State of Rebellion against him: And he hath positively enjoined us to follow this great *Exemplar*, and even *as he hath loved us, so also to love one another*. And *this* shews us the Strictness of our Obligation to obey this Royal Law of the Text, when taken in its very widest Compass; *this* shews, that no Unworthiness of our Fellow-Christians, no untoward Behaviour, no Malice nor Mischief, on their Part, can deprive them of

SERM.
VII.

their Title to that equitable Dealing, which here, with the exactest Justice, is allotted for the common Portion of all Men: In a Word, *this binds the highest Pitch and the hardest Part of the Duty fast upon the Conscience of every Christian, even to love our Enemies, and to do Good to those who hate us: Good for their Evil, and to be always kind, always tender-hearted, forgiving one another, and offering our Forgiveness to those who are most irreconcilable, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.*

Having thus set forth the special Enforcements and Improvements of this Rule in the Text, as we stand obliged to it by the Christian Law, I proceed,

III. To consider, how far its just Extent reaches.

And without all Peradventure, it extends itself throughout the whole Compass of our Duty towards our Neighbour. Some indeed have raised a nicer Question, whether it does not likewise comprehend our Duty towards God, which perhaps might be well enough resolved into some such Principle. For whatsoever the most generous Benefactor, the most indulgent

indulgent Parent, the most gracious and munificent of Princes, might expect or demand from their Clients, Children, or Subjects, all that, and infinitely more, is due from the Creature to the Creator; to him *in whom we live, and move, and have our Being*, and who is *all in all* to every one of us.

But whatever Analogy of Reason there may be in this, it is plain, that the Rule itself properly relates only to our mutual Intercourse and Dealings one with another: To the Regulation of which, how far soever extended, it is entirely adequate; which will instantly appear, if we do but just reflect, that it is equally well suited to all the various Relations, Conditions, and Circumstances of human Life; and withal, that it is not liable to any Exception, to none at least that can create any just Scruple or real Difficulty.

(1.) I say first, the Rule is equally suited to all the various Relations, Conditions, and Circumstances of human Life. A Rule it is, that there is none so high as to be above its Influence, none so low as to be beneath its Care, none so lawless as to be out of its Jurisdiction.

SERM.
VII.

w Kings, Magistrates, Parents, Patrons, Tutors, Masters, and all Superiors, are hereby entitled to all that Obedience and Submission, that Honour and Reverence, which are respectively due unto them; because there is no Man in any Degree of Superiority, but who might justly, and ought seasonably to insist upon the same, in Proportion to his Rank and Dignity.

Subjects, Children, Servants, Slaves, the basest and most abject Creatures upon Earth, have hereby an Interest in the Protection, the Beneficence, the Care, the Kindness, the Assistance and Relief of their respective Superiors; because it is what these very Superiors, could they suppose themselves in an inferior Station, would be ready to crave or claim.

Equals have hereby a Right to all courteous Respect, and civil Treatment from their Equals, because no Man, in equal Degree, loves to be despised and trampled upon as an Inferior.

In brief, (for it were endless to enlarge) all Men are, by the Tenour of this Golden Rule, obliged to exercise Justice and Mercy, Sincerity and Candour, and all kind of social Vir-

tues

tues towards all, because there is no Man but thinks he hath a good Claim to the like Usage, where-ever his own Reputation or Interest is concern'd.

Give me Leave only to add in the Words of the Apostle, (*Rom. Chap. xii.*) *Thou shalt not kill; Thou shalt not commit Adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false Witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other Commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this Saying, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.* And this Saying is most commodiously explained and applied by that other here in the Text, *All Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them;* which, as hath been before observ'd, is at once the fullest Measure of that Love which we owe to our Neighbour, and the surest Demonstration of it. For so long as we are ready to do all Things to him just in the same Manner as we might in Reason expect that he should do unto us, so long we cannot fail in any regular Instance of Love towards him, any more than we can cease to love ourselves. And so far consequently this is a perfect Rule to walk by.

(2.) And

SERM.
VII.

(2.) And it is the more apparently so, because it is liable to no Exceptions, to none at least that can create any just Scruple or real Difficulty. For those few, which at first Glance may seem to be excepted Cases, will be found, upon a closer Attention, to be either gross Mistakes concerning its Meaning, or manifest Deviations from it, or most perverse Applications of it.

Thus, if it should be pretended, that a Man is not obliged to do Good to his Enemy, because forsooth he is so stout, that he would scorn to receive a Kindness at his Hands, even in the greatest Strait or Extremity; I say, this Pretence would not be a fair Exception to the Rule, but a palpable Mistake in the Sense of it. For it runs in the general, *Whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you*, (that is, any Man indifferently, not this or that Man in particular) *do ye even so to them*. And there is *no* Man, abstracting from such personal (and those too very unreasonable and unchristian) Antipathies, but would be glad to be relieved by *any* Man in his Distress.

Again, if a Master, who is in Health and Strength, should compel his Servant that is

just recovering from Sickneſs, to hard Labour, SERM
VII.
pretending that he impoſes no more than he is willing himſelf to do; this would be ſo far from a juſt Exception, that it were indeed a plain Deviation from the Rule, which requires, that whatſoever we would that Men ſhould do unto us, we ſhould do the like to them, *i. e.* putting our ſelves in the ſame Circumſtances. But there is ſuch a Diſparity of Circumſtances between him that hath been but lately ſick, and him that is perfectly well, that it would be the greateſt Hardſhip imaginable to exact the ſame Labour from the one, which the other perhaps may be able to perform with Eaſe. And therefore ſuch a cruel Task-Maſter is not only ſubjected to the Rule, but ſtands manifeſtly convicted and condemned by it.

As to the Inſtance formerly mentioned of the habitual Drunkard preſſing his Friends to take off their full Cups, becauſe this is the *Welcome* that he himſelf would deſire; I ſay, the Man hath firſt taken Pains to make himſelf a Beaſt, and then is for urging others to wallow with him in the Mire that he delights in. But then this is a moſt unreaſonable and
unna-

SERM.
VII.

unnatural Imposition, and I think it is not properly an Exception to the Rule, that it should not take place against Reason and Nature, which it could never be design'd to do. And therefore it must be prodigiously misapplied indeed, if ever it be wrested to so cross a Purpose.

The Case of the Judge and the Malefactor, as was observ'd, is a Case determin'd beforehand by the Laws of God and Man: And the Commonwealth hath a right to the Punishment of a Criminal convict by the Hands of publick Justice. And it is no real Exception to the Rule, to say, that it shall not obtain against Law and Right; which it can never do, without notoriously perverting *Both*, and without being itself also violently perverted.

The Rule therefore, for what appears to the contrary, stands free from all Exceptions and Limitations, since those that may seem to carry the Face of such are so easily distinguish'd and accounted for, that they can never perplex the Conscience, or warp the Conduct of any sober minded Man. And consequently the Rule to all Intents and Purposes is as good as universal. I come now

IV. In

IV. In the last place to shew, how applicable this Rule is to all the good Uses and Purposes for which it was intended, and how well calculated to serve the Interests of Mankind, if duly so applied. SERM.
VII.

(I.) And it is most visibly and undeniably a Rule, itself the easiest of all others to be understood, and the readiest for practical Use, and at the same time the surest Direction to us in the Knowledge and Practice of all the several Parts of our Duty towards our Neighbour. It lies obvious to every Eye, and level to all Capacities; it requires no subtle Wit, nor knotty Head, but only an honest and an upright Heart, both to comprehend and to apply it in its utmost Latitude. And I dare be bold to aver, that whosoever makes it the Regulation of his Conscience, and is careful to square all his Actions accordingly, will more clearly discern, and perfectly understand all the nicest Measures and Boundaries of Right and Wrong, than the Man who hath turn'd over all the School-men and Casuists, or purchased his Experience in all the Courts of Justice and Equity.

Nay,

SERM.
VII.

Nay, it is a Rule that is not only exceeding easie both to be conceiv'd and applied in all Occurrences, but it even obtrudes itself upon the Understanding, and applies itself as it were of its own accord, without the least Labour of the Brain, if the Will be not wanting. It is like a strait Line, that immediately upon the Comparifon demonstrates both its own Straitness, and the Obliquity of what is not so: For so does the Equity of doing as a Man would be done by, at once exhibit itself to the View, and discover the Iniquity of the contrary Practice. Imagine the Case to be as hard and as nice as possible, let a Man but make it once his own, and it soon resolves itself, without the help of an Interpreter. For there is no Man but will tell you to a Scruple what is own Due; and let him but turn the Scales, and the same must needs appear to be his Neighbour's Right. At least the Claim is equal: And therefore if he weighs in one Balance for himself, and in another for his Neighbour, he is notoriously partial and unjust, and cannot but stand mute and self-condemn'd at the Bar of his own Conscience.

In short, the Rule before us is so immutably true, so inflexibly strait, and withal so very conspicuous,

conspicuous, that it cannot be disputed, it cannot be mistaken, it cannot so much as be overlook'd by any Man, but who is pre-determined to transgress it with a high Hand, in spite of the Conviction of his own Mind. SERM.
VII.

(2.) But the Excellency of this Rule shines brightest in the using, being so admirably well fitted as it is, to serve the Interests of Mankind, and to promote their Happiness, both in a publick and private Capacity.

Were *Princes* to fix *This* for the immoveable Boundary of their Prerogative, they would then always exercise their Authority with Safety and Satisfaction to themselves, as well as to the Ease and Benefit of their People; they would even chuse to govern, as they themselves (had that been their Allotment) would have been willing to be governed; they would remember to look up to the Sovereign Lord of all, the Original of all Power and Perfection, and study to copy, as near as possible, after him; they would desire and endeavour (that which the Philosopher proposes as the best Model for a Prince to form himself by †)

† Quoniam Deorum feci mentionem, optimè hoc Exemplum Principi constituam; ad quod formetur, ut se talem esse civibus, quales sibi Deos velit. Seneca l. 1. de Clementia.

SERM. VII. even to be just such to their Subjects, as they would have God to be to themselves; that is to say, always kind and propitious to them, always careful and tender of them, always provident for their Good and Welfare, in ways perhaps by them unthought of and unforeseen, very often beyond their Hopes, sometimes almost exceeding their very Wishes: A Happiness, at this time, peculiarly ours above all the Nations upon Earth, if we were but duly sensible of our own Happiness!

On the other hand, were *Subjects*, all in their several Stations, to act up to this uniform Principle, there would never be any Disturbance given to Civil Government: the Fierceness of Animosity would then grow mild, and the Hissing of Faction entirely cease; there would be no malicious Misrepresentation of a Prince's best actions, no clamorous Opposition to his wisest Councils, no devilish Invention employed to amuse the People with Lies, and to deceive them into Discontent; no Tares of Sedition scattered where the good Seed of the Gospel only should be sown; in fine, no specious Colours laid on to add Charms to the Witchcraft of Rebellion, and make it

look innocent and inviting to vulgar Eyes: SERM.
VII.
 I say, were Men to do to others as *they* would
 be done unto, we should never hear of any of
 these Enemies to Peace, or Disturbers of it:
 For even they who are at a distance from the
 Helm, and have no share in the Administration
 of Affairs, must for ever own, that, were
 they themselves to be advanced to that high
 Trust and Power, they would judge it but a
 very ill Requital, to have the Cares and Toils
 of Government multiplied, and made much
 heavier, by such ungrateful and undutiful Be-
 haviour; they would doubtless call it by the
 proper Name of Sedition, and think it a
 Crime worthy of the severest Punishment, if
 they should find themselves encountred on all
 Hands, by all the basest Arts and most unfair
 Methods that designing Heads can contrive to
 enflame turbulent Spirits, and embroil the
 publick Quiet: Nor is there room here to al-
 ledge, that wherever Parties are bandying a-
 gainst Parties, this is the Treatment that they
 must expect from each other, as they may
 happen to prevail in their turns; For, *my Bre-*
thren, these things ought not so to be; since,
 it must be agreed, that the Christian Standard

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which

SERM.
VII.

which never varies, is, *to do to all Men as ye would that they should do unto you, not as they may have done to you, or may be likely to do to you.*

Again, if every private Man were to carry *This* as a Living Law about him, and make it the Companion and Counsellor of his retired Thoughts, and a Watcher, as it were, over the secret Motions of his Soul, then would all those troublesome and self-tormenting Passions, that are so apt to ruffle the Tranquillity of our Minds, be perfectly calm'd and conquer'd; boisterous Anger, sour Malice, fretting Envy, bloody Revenge, would find no Heart to give them Reception, nor Food to nourish them: For every Man that feels what passes within him, and reflects at all, must needs perceive the Irregularity and Unreasonableness of these Passions in himself, which he is always ready, upon cool Deliberation, and when least concern'd to condemn in others, but is then sure to have a very acute Sense of their injurious Nature, when they are levell'd against himself as the Object of their Fury.

Lastly, would Men fairly bring all their Actions to the same Test, then would those per-

nicious

Malicious Practices that undermine the Foundations of all friendly Correspondence and equal Commerce be utterly banish'd; there would be no proper Employment left for Censoriousness and Slander, Lying and Dissembling, Avarice and Extortion, Cheating and Stealing, Treachery and Perjury: For all Mankind are sufficiently convinc'd, that these Vices are infinitely fruitful in Mischief; and no Man, who is duly sensible of this, can think himself privileged to do that Mischief by them, which he would be unwilling to suffer from them: And if, what all unanimously condemn, every one would industriously avoid, Men would then live together at perfect Quiet, and in great Security: No Man's Reputation would be basely attacked, no Man's Property either slyly or violently invaded; there would be no Temptation nor Inclination to malicious Prosecutions, no Handle nor Pretext for vexatious Law-Suits; the very Noise of Strife would be hush'd in the Courts, as well as that of complaining in the Streets.

Such would be the blessed Effects of this Christian Principle, if it were uniformly reduced to Practice. And O that I could say, this

SERM.
VII.

too is our own Case; that we were a People
 so disposed to be happy among ourselves!

But alas! I fear, our Character is of another hew, too nearly resembling that of the Jew in the times of *Ijaiah* and *Jeremiah*: A People *who are grievous Revolters, walking with Slanders, they are Brass and Iron, all Corrupters* — A People, *whose Hands are defiled with Blood, and their Fingers with Iniquity; whose Lips have spoken Lies, and their Tongue uttered Perverseness*: — A People, *who know not the way of Peace, and in whose Goings there is no Judgment; who have made them crooked Paths where Truth faileth, and Equity cannot enter and where he that departeth from evil maketh himself a Prey*: — A People, *where ever Brother will utterly supplant; whose Houses are full of Deceit, by which they wax fat and shine; yea, and overpass the Deeds of the Wicked*: — A People (to add no more to the Character) *that proceed from Evil to Evil, and weary themselves to commit Iniquity.*

This is a Catalogue of some of the Vices that were most predominant in the Prophetical Days: but they are all of them, I think, too closely copied in our own Practice: And

whereas it is observable, that among other the
Marks of a very corrupt and degenerate Peo-
ple, this is fix'd upon the Jews for one, that
they were extremely addicted to Lies, and
Calumnies, and all manner of perverse Speeches;
in that kind of Licentiousness, if I am not
much mistaken, we may pretend to the
Mastery : For never certainly in any Age or
Country, did the Spirit of lewd Lying and
Libelling, that hath been wont to walk in
Darkness, appear so openly at Noon-day, and
so audaciously : It possesses our Tongues and
our Pens, and fills both with the *Poison of*
Assps; it sallies forth daily from the Press,
and (like *Satan*, whose Offspring it is,) goeth
to and fro, far and wide, seeking whom to
devour, preying upon the clearest Innocence,
and blasting the fairest good Names : It med-
dles with Matters of the greatest Moment,
and the nicest Nature, on Purpose to misre-
port or misconstrue them : It flies at Dignity
without Distinction, not sparing even the
Supreme : It mingles with the People from
the Highest to the Lowest, with a Design to
infect them ; and, to that End, it is perpe-
tually infusing the most groundless Jealousies

SERM.
VII.

and Prejudices, and insinuating even the most invidious and odious Charges against those who are in Authority, and endeavouring, by all the united Cunning and Impudence of Falshood, to work things up to a Pitch of Distraction and Confusion.

This, sure, if any other, is *an Iniquity to be punished by the Judges*; and pardon me if I wish it could once meet with its deserved Punishment; for it seems to have been artful enough hitherto to baffle the Force of the Laws in being, or rather bold enough to mock their Weakness; nay, it hath puzzled the best Skill of our wisest State Physicians, to find a more efficacious Remedy for this Stubborn and Epidemical Evil. I pray God at length rebuke the foul Spirit with which we are so grievously vexed, and cast it out of us, and send the Spirit of Truth and Concord in the stead, that so we may recover our selves out of these crooked Paths, and find and follow the Way of Peace before it be hidden from our Eyes!

And, having said thus much, I shall not digress farther nor spend any more of your time, especially in the way of Complaint, which I do not delight in: And yet I may be permitted

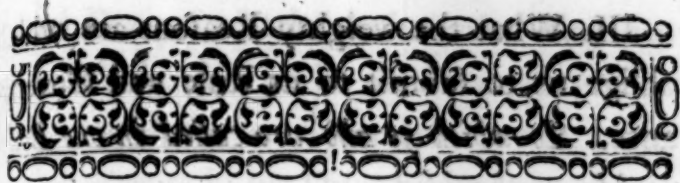
mitted to say, that I have not wandred, by
a great deal, so far from my Text, as the Per-
sons, guilty of such Practices, do from the
Duty enjoyn'd in it, which, most certainly,
obliges us *to put away all Lying, and speake every
Man Truth with his Neighbour, as we are
Members one of another,* and ought to hold
peaceable and useful Communication together;
and as no Man in particular would be willing
to have his own Reputation aspers'd, or his
Credulity practis'd upon, no Man would wil-
lingly, by any of the Liars Arts, be led into
Errors, and Snares, and very great Inconveni-
ences, both to the Detriment of his private
Affairs, and to the Disturbance and Hazard of
the Society in which he is involved.

For what remains therefore, let us endea-
vour to rectifie all that is amiss, and to reform
our whole Conduct according to this perfect
Standard in the Text: And, at the same time
let us bless and adore both the Wisdom and
Goodness of God, who hath provided so well
for the Ease, and Peace, and Welfare of Man-
kind, by this compendious Maxim of all Jus-
tice and all Charity, that we must be wilfully
blind, blind even to our own Interest, if we do

SERM.
VII.

not see, embrace and adhere to it : For it is a Maxim (as hath fully appeared) not only highly reasonable, and easily intelligible, but even self-evident, and (as I may so speak) self-applicable. And that which seems to be spoken by *Moses*, of the Moral Law in general, is most remarkably true of this particular Branch of it. *This Commandment is not bidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? Neither is it beyond the Sea, that thou shouldst say, who shall go over the Sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it and do it? But the Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy Mouth, and in thy Heart, that thou mayest do it, Deut. xxx. 11, 12, 13, 14.* And if notwithstanding all this intimate Familiarity and Nearness, we refuse to hearken to it, and do it, the very Heathens will rise up in Judgment against us, and it shall be more tolerable in the Day of equal Retribution for *Epicuretus* and *Severus* than for us. God grant therefore that we may not fall short of Mercy for neglecting to do Justice, that we may not receive that at God's Hand which we *would not*, for refusing to do to Men, as we would that they should have done unto us! *Amen.*

S E R-



S E R M O N VIII.

Let the Peace of God rule in
your Hearts, &c.



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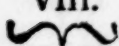
*And let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts;
to the which also ye are called in one Body,
and be ye thankful.*

IN handling this Portion of Scripture, I
shall make these following Particulars the
Subject of my Enquiry.

I. I shall enquire, What the *Apostle* may here
be supposed to understand, by the *Peace of
God*.

II. What is meant by its *ruling in our
Hearts*.

III. What

SERM.
VIII.

III. What the weighty Reasons are which oblige us to submit to its Rule and Government. *To which ye also are called in one Body, and be ye thankful.*

IV. What those Motives are which may most effectually induce us to obey *the Peace of God ruling in our Hearts*, and submit to its Guidance and Direction.

And I. I shall enquire, What the *Apostle* may be supposed to understand by *the Peace of God*, and why it is so called.

Now *Peace* both in civil or sacred Acceptation, is capable of two different Senses, which bear a near Affinity to each other. It may denote the external State of Things, when all is quiet and orderly in a Neighbourhood or Community, in opposition to the Heats and Broils of Diffension, the Calamities of intestine War, or the Ravages of Persecution; or else it may denote that internal Habit of the Mind, which sweetly disposes good Men to all the interchangeable good Offices, which are the strongest Cement of Society, as having a natural Tendency to promote Amity and Unity, and to prevent all the miserable Consequences of Division and Distraction.

And

And *Peace* in both these Senses may not improperly be said to be *the Peace of God*, as depending upon his Sovereign Power, who hath all Events in his Disposal, and the Hearts of all Men in his Hand. *Peace* in the former Sense, as it respects the external State of Things, is a Felicity. In the latter, as taken for a Habit of the Mind, it is a Virtue. The former is an especial Blessing of Providence, the latter a Gift of God's good Grace; and the latter is, under God, both the procuring Cause of the former, and the necessary Means to preserve it. For 'tis then, and then only, that a firm and lasting *Peace* can be expected or enjoy'd without Interruption, when God turneth the Hearts of Princes as the Rivers of Water, and maketh Men of one Mind in a House, or a City, when he is pleased to endue Governors with such an Excellency of Spirit, as may enable them to discern that the *Stability of their Empire* consists in the Affections of their People, and that the People's Welfare ought to be their supreme Law, as being the chief End of the Institution. And when, on the other hand, he molds the Subjects and Fellow-Citizens into such a tractable Disposition,

SERM.
VIII.

tion, as will effectually incline them to dwell quietly and inoffensively, and to live and love like Brethren, like Friends, like *Christians*.

And 'tis this *peaceable*, this *Christian* Disposition, no Doubt, to whose Guidance St. Paul commits us in this Exhortation in the Text, *Let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts*. For as the *Heart* is here taken either generally, for all the inward Motions and Operations of the Mind of Man, or more particularly for the Will, together with the Affections, of which it is commonly held to be the Source and Seat; so nothing can properly be said to *rule the Heart* (taken in this Sense) but some such inward commanding Principles, as can religiously regulate all our Thoughts, Desires and Interests, and controul all our Passions; and consequently govern the whole Man, by gently determining the Will to the Choice of such Means as may best conduce to so desirable an End, as is universal Love and good Will, and that *Peace* and Tranquillity which is at once its Effect and temporal Reward. Some such Principle it must be, as may be able upon occasion to exert each of those lovely Graces of Mercy and Kindness, Humility, Meekness and

Consider'd and Explain'd.

273

SERM.
VIII.

and Long-Suffering, and make them all subservient to the main Design.

And such a Principle is that *peaceable* Frame of Soul, that gracious and blessed Disposition afore-mentioned, which therefore the *Apostle* dignifies accordingly, by styling it in so eminent a manner, *The Peace of God*.

And 'tis deservedly so styled, partly because 'tis in Obedience to the Command of God, *The God of Peace*, who was willing to be reconciled to us, even whilst *we were Enemies*, and therefore may require this and much more at our Hands: and partly, because 'tis so peculiarly suited to the Genius, and whole Purport of the *Gospel (the Gospel of Peace)* which makes Overtures of Reconciliation to us, upon such easy and equitable Terms; but most especially, because 'tis the more immediate Work of the Spirit of God, rectifying our disorderly Wills and Affections, and softening and suppling our stubborn Hearts, till they be ready to admit, and fit to entertain the Heavenly Guests of *Love and Peace*, which are accordingly reckoned among the genuine *Fruits of the Spirit*, Galat. v. 22. *But the Fruits of the Spirit are Love, Joy, Peace, &c.*

Nor

For what Power less than that which first composed the jarring Elements into so regular a Frame, as is the material World, or adjusted the several discordant Humours in the human Body into such a due Temperament, as might best consist with Health, and serve the Purposes of Life; what Power less than this could be sufficient to rule the free, but froward Will of Man, and to subdue his rebellious Lusts and Passions often interfering with themselves, and almost always clashing with the Interests, Designs, or Inclinations of others! What else, I say, but the Efficacy of his *Spirit*, *who alone worketh great Marvels*, could be sufficient to quell the Disorders which must needs arise from hence, and make all things end in *Peace*, tho' they seemed designed and prepared for Battle? And such a Disposition, so wonderfully, so powerfully impress'd upon the Minds of Men, may fitly be called *the Peace of God*, which as 'tis alone able, so for this very Reason (were there no other) it has the best Title to *rule in our Hearts*.

And from hence I shall pass on to the second Enquiry :

Namely,

Namely, II. What is meant by its *ruling* SERM. VIII.
in our Hearts, and what the good Effects of it
 will be, when it does so.

And the meaning of this we may gather from the primary Signification of the Word, *ἐπαγεύετω*, which we translate *Rule*; but it is an *Agonistical* Word, relating to the Games of Mastery, in use among the *Ancients*, in which it was customary always to appoint some certain Judge, or Umpire, who was empowered to decide all Differences among the several Rivals in Honour, and to adjudge the Prize to him that best deserved it; and by *his* Decision they were all bound to abide without any farther Controversy. And in Allusion to this Custom, St. *Chrysostom* (with most other Interpreters) resolves this Place into some such Sense as this, *viz.* " If any thing falls
 " out in your *Christian* Race, which unhap-
 " pily breeds a Conflict within your Breast, and
 " sets your own Thoughts at variance with
 " one another; whatever carnal Reason may
 " plead, blind Passion suggest, or your cor-
 " rupt Inclinations covet, let the *Peace of God*
 " be the governing Principle, let that be the
 " sole Moderator in all such Contrasts; so
 " shall

SERM.
VIII.

“ shall ye be still determin’d to that which is
 “ best and safest, most for the Glory of God,
 “ and the Benefit of your Self, your Neigh-
 “ bour, and the whole Community.”

For Instance, suppose a Man to be injured or affronted, and upon this occasion two contrary Thoughts to start up on the sudden, striving, as it were, which shall first take place ; the one furiously pushing him to rash Revenge, the other gently pulling him back, arming him with Patience, and teaching him how to forgive and conquer. Now if the *Peace of God* bears the chief Sway in this Man’s Heart, the Quarrel will be compromised at an easy rate, and the Preference given (as ’tis justly due) to the seasonable Motion for Patience and Forgiveness, which will certainly be the best Expedient to keep the patient Sufferer both safe and innocent, and make the unprovok’d Offender a hearty Penitent, and perhaps the faster Friend for having once been an Enemy without Cause.

And thus it will be in all Occurrences of human Life, or Occasions of Discontent or Dispute. For *where the Peace of God rules, it rules alone with absolute Authority*, not

only

only to determine all Controversies, but to silence all Murmuring, not only to vanquish all Opposition, but to extinguish all Resentment.

SERM.
VIII.

And what the happy Effects of a Government so steady, and yet so easy, will be, is obvious enough to conceive. For *the Peace of God so ruling in Mens Hearts*, will in course enable them to get the Mastery over their own Passions; and it will enure them to the Exercise of all social Virtues, and teach them to comport themselves suitably in all Relations and Capacities of Life.

It appears therefore, that when the *Apostle* exhorts us to *let the Peace of God rule in our Hearts*, he is to be understood in a Sense agreeable to what has been already deliver'd; importing, that this *peaceable Disposition* ought to be the supreme in all things, and to govern our Wills and Affections, and consequently our Actions too, and effectually incline us to that blessed Union, and universal Good-will, which is the honourable Badge of our *Christian* Profession.

And I think at the same'tis obvious enough what the Effects of so easy a Government

VOL. VIII.

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must

SERM.
VIII.

must be, where it is once well established; which, if I conceive aright, are reducible to these that follow.

1. It will enable Men to get the entire Mastery over their Passions.

2. It will enure them to the Exercise of all social Virtues, especially those which are more peculiar to the Gospel.

3. In Consequence of this, it will teach them what belongs to their Duty, and how to comport themselves suitably in all Capacities, and Relations of Life.

First, I say, it will enable Men to get the entire Mastery over their Passions. And this it must of Necessity do, in order to strengthen and secure its own Government. *For whence come Wars and Fightings amongst you, (says St. James) come they not hence, even from your Lusts which war within your Members?* And till these be brought under Subjection, 'tis impossible there should be any settled Peace. For where inordinate Anger is ever and anon boiling up into Madness, and Revenge is continually thirsting after Mischief; where Envy is pining at its Neighbour's Prosperity, and Malice is plotting the Fall of the

Inno-

Innocent ; where Avarice and Oppression join Hand in Hand, Lust and Intemperance minister to each other ; and where Pride and Ambition exalt themselves, by trampling upon their Rivals, and are still aiming to climb higher, though it be upon the Ruins of Church and State ; *there is Confusion, and every evil Work*, and nothing but wild Distraction reigns. But on the contrary, where *the Peace of God* has once got Possession, and begins to exert its full Authority, the first thing it does, is to *mortify the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts*, and to slay, or at least disable and disarm such its Enemies, as are not willing to submit to so mild and gracious a Governour. And here Anger, if at any Time it breaks loose, is soon brought to Reason and Moderation : Revenge and Malice are totally suppressed : All unlawful Desires perfectly restrained ; and all aspiring Thoughts utterly discouraged, and discountenanced ; and in a Word, every Motion of the Soul is entirely subject to the same Law, and all are kindly conspiring to the same End. And this is the first and most immediate Effect of *the Peace of God*, and *its good Government in our Hearts*.

SERM.
VIII.

2. The second Effect naturally follows, that it enures Men to the Practice of all human and social Virtues, such as Justice and Moderation, Courtesy and Candour, Kindness and Compassion, Humility, Meekness, and Long-suffering. For where the unruly Lusts and Passions are once subdu'd, these virtuous Habits must be super-induc'd in course: And where the *Peace of God* has the sovereign Rule, they must be in constant Exercise. For they are, as it were, the Officers of State, by whose Ministry all its Commands are executed; by whose Assistance its Government is supported. And accordingly we find they are marshall'd (most of 'em) in goodly Array, and stand ready, as it were, to receive their Orders, both in the Verses immediately foregoing my Text, and the iv. Chapt. of the Epistle to the *Ephesians*.

And indeed the Man who has received the *Peace of God* into his Heart, in the Power thereof; that is, he who is a hearty *Lover* of *Peace*, and studies by all Means to maintain and promote it, will find himself obliged in the first Place, to be just and honest in all his Dealings, as knowing that there can be

no Foundation for *Peace* without it ; and he will see Reason at the same Time, to temper his Justice with Moderation, and not skrew it up to all the Extremities, which the Letter of the Law may be made to countenance, as knowing that such Practices, though barely legal, can neither begin in Love, nor end in any good Agreement.

In like Manner he will look upon Courtesy and Civility, as a common Debt to Mankind in general, and one of the Things which chiefly *makes for Peace* ; since no-body can expect much Good-will, where scarcely a good Word will be afforded : Nor will he only talk smoothly to Mens Faces, but will speak well of them behind their Backs, and judge candidly of all their Actions, always believing the best, when there is no other Appearance ; and hoping the best still, even when there are Suspicions to the contrary. And this he will think himself bound to do, because he knows *that Censoriousness*, which prevails so much in the World, to be the very Bane of all Friendship and civil Conversation.

SERM.
VIII.

Nor will he think soft Words and kind Thoughts sufficient, but he will demonstrate the Reality of his Love, as he has Opportunity, by Acts of Benevolence and Charity, and especially by *putting on Bowels of Mercy* towards the needy and distressed; for he is sensible, that Necessity has a Privilege to be querulous, and that not to relieve one who is in great Want, is indeed to wrong and defraud him.

In short, he will demean himself with all Humility, not arrogating more Respect than belongs to him, nor denying any Man what is his Due, being well aware, that as nothing is more grievous than Contempt, so nothing is more contentious than a proud Heart.

He will likewise *shew all Meekness to all Men*, as being persuaded that the Man who is easily provoked for every Trifle, can hardly be a steady Friend, or at least will be a troublesome one. Nay, he will bear much and long, put up Injuries patiently, wisely considering, that to revenge them, is to multiply them upon his own Head, and to sacrifice his own Quiet, as well as the Peace of the Neighbourhood.

bourhood. Nay further, he will return Good for Evil, in Hopes by that Means, to *heap Coals of Fire on his Enemy's Head*, to soften him by Degrees, and at last to melt him into Repentance, and bring him to a perfect Reconciliation. These are the Virtues in which the *peaceable Man* must be continually practis'd, and this is the second Effect of the Peace of God ruling in our Hearts. And

3. In Consequence of this, it will teach Men what belongs to their Duty, and how to comport themselves suitably in all Capacities and Relations of Life, and if *possible, to live peaceably with all Men.*

For he who owns the Sovereignty of the *Peace of God*, and sees its powerful Influence in his Life, and has been accordingly train'd up to the Practice of those excellent Virtues aforementioned, can hardly be wanting in any material Point of Duty, as a *private Man*, a *Citizen*, or a *Christian*. For put him in what Circumstances you will, view him in all the different Respects imaginable, there will be one constant Tenour, and the same Tendency in all his Actions. Place him at the Head of a Family, and he will exercise his

SERM.
VIII.

Authority with Discretion, and sweeten it with Clemency, and make all Things quiet and easy. Suppose him in the opposite Relation, and he will found his Reverence in Love, and season his Obedience with Cheerfulness, and to be sure, give no Disturbance to the *Peace*, and good Government of the Family.

Rank him with his Equals, be it in the Way of Conversation or Business, and he shall make Charity and Equity his only Standard, *and do unto all Men, as he would they should do unto him*, and treat them with the same Candour that he expects from others.

Send him to his Inferiours, and he can *condescend to Men of Low Estate*, with all Tenderness to their Infirmities, and Allowances to their Condition, still preserving that Respect which is due to human Nature, under all Abasements, and giving them no Occasion to think themselves despised.

Consider him in a State of Inferiority, and he will contentedly keep his Rank, with all decent Regard to his Superiors, and with all dutiful Submission, especially to those *who are in Authority over him, whom he will obey, not only*

for Wrath, but for Conscience Sake, and make his Duty the Offering of a willing and loving Heart; and this not only to the *Good* and *Gentle*, but to the *Froward* also; as not thinking himself at Liberty, to withhold the due *Tribute*, either of Duty, Honour, or Obedience, unless he can be sure to have it repaid in so much Favour, much less to disturb the Publick for the Sake of some private Dislike, or Dissatisfaction, or even for any Grievance supposed or real.

Take another View of him, as a subordinate Magistrate, and he will really be what he ought to be, a Conservator and Preserver of the Peace, both by his Authority and Example: He will think himself entrusted with that Share of Power he has, to be a Protector, not an Oppressor: Not to insult or domineer over lesser People, but to defend them in their Rights, and when Need is, to redress their Wrongs, and he will study rather to compose Differences between Neighbours, by the Interposal of prudent Advice, than widen or heighten them, by the over-hasty Application of a legal Remedy, when it might be spared.

SERM. VIII. spared. In short, he will in all Cases administer Justice, both impartially and dispassionately; never suffering any Gall or Spleen of his own, to mingle with those wholesome Severities which his Office may sometimes require him to inflict.

Lastly, to put the highest Supposition, if a Person of this excellent Spirit be seated on a Throne, and vested with Majesty, he will chuse to rule, knowing whose Subject he is, *even as the Peace of God rules in his own Heart*, that is, gently, though powerfully; he will be to his Subjects what he would have God to be to himself, though just, yet merciful: He will *God-like be kind, even to the Evil and Unthankful*; but to the Good more abundantly gracious. In one Word, he will look upon himself as appointed by God, to be the Guardian to the Lives, the Liberties, the Estates, the Peace, the Safety, and Prosperity of those he governs: And while he devotes himself wholly to this great Work, he will judge his Empire sufficiently to be established in the Love and Esteem of his People, and think himself best intitl'd to the Protection and

and Blessing of Heaven, by Faith, fully discharging so weighty a Trust, and answering the End of God's Ordinance.

Thus will the Person, *in whose Heart the Peace of God* bears sovereign Sway, be ready to acquit himself in all Relations, and Capacities, to govern, or be governed, or to behave himself decently and agreeably to all Ranks and Degrees of Men, and always with a regardful Eye, to that which is the chief Design, and main Prop of Society; *viz.* The Propagation of Peace and Love to Mankind. To which also he holds himself more especially obliged as a *Christian*. Which brings me to the third Thing to be enquired into. *viz.*

3. What the weighty Reasons are, which oblige us to submit to the Government and Direction of *the Peace of God*. And several Reasons there are, (which have all their Weight) some taken from the Propensions and Inclinations of human Nature; others from the Cognation and Likeness that is between one Man and another: Others from the Ends and Interests of civil Society: But my Text furnishes me with such as are still more cogent and binding, imply'd in these Words,

SERM.
VIII. Words, *To the which also ye are called in one Body, &c.* which are taken,

1. From the general Vocation, as *Christians*.
2. From the peculiar Nature of the spiritual Society, of which we are Members, Which are both enforced.
3. By the Gratitude we owe to God for his unspeakable Mercy towards us.

The first Reason is taken from our general Vocation, as *Christians*. And this is what *St. Paul* urges with much Vehemence and Affection: *Ephes. iv. 1. I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called, with all Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love; endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.* And this, if we are indeed the Servants and Followers of Christ, is what is injoin'd by frequent and solemn Precepts, inculcated by the most pathological Exhortations, and recommended by the best of Patterns; and is in short most exactly agreeable to the whole Purport of the Gospel, and the

the gracious Design of its Author, who is our
Peace, and hath made both *Jew* and *Gentile*
one; having pull'd down the middle Wall of
Partition, that so he might reconcile both un-
to God by the Cross. And therefore, how-
ever narrow-spirited the *Jews* might formerly
be, or still are, and how hateful soever the
Gentiles might be in their Sight, yet we
Christians, if we understand our Profession,
and desire to live answerably, *are bound, as*
much as in us lieth, to live peaceably with them,
and with all Men; and much more to be sure
with one another; especially if we consider,

2. The peculiar Nature of the Society of
which we are Members.

For *we are called in one Body*, the mystical
Body of *Christ's* Church, which is in all Re-
spects one with itself. It is purchased by
one Lord, who is also its Head and Governor:
It is animated by one Spirit, it is built upon one
Faith: It gives Admission to its Members by
one Baptism, and entitles them all *to one Hope*
of their Calling. And as the whole Society of
Christians makes up this one Body of *Christ*,
so are they all Members in particular; and
for Members to quarrel and fall foul, to tear
and

SERM.
VIII.

and wound one another, is monstrous and unnatural; it is at once to offer Violence to themselves, and to rebel against their Head. And upon this Account *Christians* are under the strictest Engagement, to be at *Peace* and Unity among themselves, and that not only in the common Affairs of Life, but likewise (nay and much more) in religious Matters, from whence this Argument borrows its chief Strength; for if there is but one Body, why and whither should we separate? If but one Faith, and but one unerring Rule of the Faith, wherefore should we differ? If but one God, why should we divide into so many several Modes of Worship? Certainly it would suit much better with our mutual Obligation, as Fellow-Members, *to hold the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace, and whereto we have already attained, to walk by the same Rule, and to mind the same Thing.* Philip. iii. 16. And that which enforces these Reasons still the more is,

3. The Gratitude we owe to Almighty God for his unspeakable Mercy towards us, *to the which also ye are called in one Body, and be ye thankful.* For God was willing to be re-

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concil'd to us; and after having waited for ^{SERM.}
our Repentance with much Long-suffering, ^{VIII.}
and Patience, he at last sent his Son upon an
Embassy of Peace, which he not only most
graciously undertook to mediate in our Be-
half, but also to purchase it for us with his
Blood; in Vertue of which infinite Price, we
receive Remission of Sins, by spiritual Regene-
ration, and are made Members of Christ, and
Heirs together with him. O! the Riches of
the Grace of God! And what shall we ren-
der unto him for these his inestimable Bene-
fits? Sure the least we can do to testify our
Thankfulness, (and alas how much more is
the most! but the least we can do) is *to be*
kind to one another, tender hearted, forbearing
and forgiving one another, even as God for
Christ's Sake has forgiven us. It remains,

4. That I enquire what those Motives are,
which may most effectually induce you to *obey*
the Peace of God ruling in your Hearts, and
submit to its Guidance and Direction.

But before I proceed to this, it may not
be amiss to reflect a little upon the Manners of
Men, and the State of Things in the *Christian*
World, and see what Sort of Conformity they
bear

SERM.
VIII.

bear to that which has already appeared to be our indispensable Duty, and which will, in the Sequel, appear to be our undoubted Interest.

But alas! for Shame and Pity! Though the *genuine Fruits of the Spirit be Love and Peace*, and though we might expect to find them in Perfection, where the Hearts of Men should be supposed to be duly cultivated and prepared, in the Fulness of the Blessings of the Gospel of Christ, yet notwithstanding, it is but rare (in History) to meet with any visible Foot-steps of that which should make up the distinguishing Part of our Character, as *Christians*.

So sly, so industrious the *Enemy of our Peace* has been, to sow the Seeds of Dissension in all Ages, and to scatter them throughout the World! And so rash, so ready have Men always been, to make themselves his Instruments in this accursed Work!

Hence is it that *Christendom* has so often been made the guilty Scene of War and Bloodshed, of Sedition and Tumult, of Animosity and Jealousies, of Enmity and Bitterness, attended with all Manner of Disorder and

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Confusion, both in the publick Affairs of SERM. VIII. Kingdoms, and the more contracted Interests of Neighbourhoods and Families. And (which sounds yet worse) Religion, notwithstanding all its sacred Obligations to the contrary, has many times been wrongfully entitled to these Quarrels, and the Church of God has always had more than her Share in all these Disasters.

To look no farther than ourselves, and the present Times. God hath rais'd us up a King to be our mighty Deliverer: He has cover'd his Head in the Day of Battle: He has crowned his Endeavours with Success and Honour, and blessed his People also with Peace and Safety.

But how are we dispos'd to receive so valuable a Blessing? How are we qualify'd to enjoy it? How are we prepared to improve it, and to render ourselves, in any Measure, either worthy or capable of its Continuance and Increase amongst us? Do we not rather betray our Unworthiness of so great a Mercy, and shew indeed, that we are utterly unqualify'd for it, by our unpeaceable and *unchristian* Carriage one to another. Being

VOL. VIII. X (like

SERM.
VIII.

(like the *Gnosticks*, against whom St. Paul draws up this black Catalogue, *Rom. i. 29.*)
Filled with all Unrighteousness, Fornication, Wickedness, Covetousness, Maliciousness; full of Envy, Murder, Debate, Deceit, Malignity, Whisperers, Backbiters, Haters of God, [and hateful to him] Despiteful, proud Boasters, Inventors of evil Things, disobedient to Parents, without Understanding, Covenant-Breakers, without natural Affection, Implacable, Unmerciful. Can these, I beseech you, *be the Things that belong to our Peace?* Or can they be made to consist with it? Will not God rather be provoked to *visit* again once more *for these Things.* And *shall not my Soul be avenged of such a Nation as this?* Have we not too much Reason to fear it, especially when we consider, that these Irregularities are not confined to Matters of private Inter-course, but do sensibly affect the Publick, and endanger its Welfare? And indeed, what through the Rapaciousness and Ambition of some, who are willing to sacrifice the Good of the Community to their own selfish Designs and sordid Interests; what through the Murmurings and Complaints of others, who

are always ready to revile and despise their Governors ; and to call both their Justice and Wisdom in Question ; what through the intemperate Zeal of those, who will allow none to be good Subjects but themselves, and are still dividing and weakening us, by odious Names of Distinction, and the arbitrary Marks of Faction and Party ; and what, thro' the tormenting Fears, and unreasonable Suspicions of a People so infinitely jealous of our Liberties as we are ; I say, what through these, and the like prevailing Distempers among us, we seem to be loosening the very Props of Government, and undermining our own Security ; and may perhaps in Time, do that Work to our Enemies Hands, which neither by open Force, or secret Machinations, they could ever yet accomplish.

And that which renders the Prospect both unpromising and uncomfortable, is the poor divided State of this envied Church ; envied, as well she may, of proud *Rome* itself ; whose Usurpations she abhors, whose Innovations she renounces ; and yet, not so heartily beloved, so stedfastly embrac'd, so zealously defended, as she ought to be, by the Sons of

SERM.
VIII.

her Bosom, those who have been baptis'd into her Faith, and are under all imaginable Ties to submit to her just Authority. For notwithstanding she is so sound a Part of the *Catholick Church*, so conformable to the primitive Pattern, both in her Doctrine and Discipline: Notwithstanding her Articles are so pacifick and moderate, and her Terms of Communion so lawful and easy: Notwithstanding her Rites are so grave and solemn, and indeed not only decent, but edifying too; yet how is her Face covered with numerous Sects? How is her Lustre darkened by Clouds of Errors, and her Unity broken by infinite Diversities of Opinion? How is her Health endangered by the most Pestilent Heresies, and her Strength become the Scorn of the Contumacious, and the Triumph of the *Libertine* and the *Atheist*? And whence shall we say had these Things their Beginning? and where can we think will they end? where, if not timely prevented, but in the general Decay of all *Christian Piety*, if not the utter Extirpation of *Christianity* from among us. For these, to all Appearance, were once Forerunners of Desolation, in the

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Asian and African Churches; and where the Provocations are much the same, what can secure us from the same Judgments? And shall we still, in the Midst of all this Danger, contend about lesser Matters, and neglect the weightier Points of *Christian Love and Charity*? Shall we quarrel eternally about indifferent Rites and Ceremonies? And shall we reckon the Peace of God's Church also (upon which *St. Paul* lays so great a Stress) among Things indifferent? And what Project of Peace can be form'd, I would fain know, that shall satisfy all Parties? What solid Foundation for it, but in Unity of Judgment, and Uniformity of Practice; or in Unity of Affection at least, where the other cannot be attained? And how can we make any Advances towards this, but by adhering to the Communion of the Church Established, in all Things lawful, by meekly submitting to her Determinations in Things doubtful, and where Men lie under invincible Scruples, by modestly dissenting in such Particulars only, and not making this the Occasion of a total Separation. And this I may venture to affirm, would be the greatest Check

SERM.
VIII.

to that Profaneness and Licentiousness which have broken in upon us; the best Preservative against the spreading Infection of Heresy; the main Bulwark and Defence against our Adversaries of *Rome*, who have always made Sport with our unhappy Divisions, and never fail'd to improve the fair Opportunity.

I would not have these Reflections thought to be out of Time and Place, and so altogether impertinent. For it was none of my Intention to widen our Differences, and rake in our angry Wounds, and make them bleed afresh: Much rather would I chuse, had I any Balsam, any thing to mollify and heal, pour it in, and close them, and bind them up with all *Christian* Tenderness. And I have said what I have said in the Spirit of Meekness, and out of a real and compassionate Concern for the *Peace* of this Church and State, in hopes to raise the same Compassion in all *the Sons of Peace*, that they may know, pursue, and embrace *the things which make for it, before they be hidden from their Eyes*; and that they may learn to set a due Value upon so desirable a Blessing, from the Miseries we
have

have already felt, or may even yet fear from the Want of it.

And these being awakening Considerations, I hope they will make way for the Enforcement of the Duty in general, at the same time that they evince the Necessity of it in our particular Circumstances; and that the Motives inducing to Practice will have the deeper Impression upon your Minds: Which therefore I shall now at least offer to your serious Thoughts.

And if the Proposal of Advantage be any Inducement (as it is commonly in other Cases) many will the Advantages be of a *peaceable* Temper and Carriage, exceeding many and great in all Respects, private and publick; temporal, spiritual, and eternal. I shall propose them promiscuously. And

1. It makes a Man capable of enjoying himself, and yields the greatest, the sweetest Contentment; for where the *Peace of God* is wrought into the very Frame of the Spirit, and has got quiet Possession in the Heart; there all is calm within, without any irregular Passions to discompose the Mind, or any unreasonable Appetite to create Vexation and

SERM.
VIII.

Torment. And such a Man as this is never imbittered with Hatred and Malice, nor fretted with pining Envy ; he is never ruffled with furious Anger, nor goaded with cruel Revenge, nor swol'n or distended beyond Proportion, by Pride, Avarice, or Ambition. No; such disorderly Motions are perfectly curbed, and all his Desires are modest and reasonable ; all his Designs are honest and laudable ; his whole Deportment is innocent, easy, and engaging, and he finds an agreeable Satisfaction in every Action of his Life, but more particularly in Works of Charity and Mercy ; which to perform, is to do justice to his natural Inclinations, and to do good to his own Soul ; and as he feels the most sensible Delight in the Performance, so he is marvelously refreshed with the Comforts of a good Conscience in the Reflection. And the Man that is thus disposed, as nothing can give him Disturbance from within, so scarce any thing can annoy him from without ; for 'tis hard to pick a Quarrel with so much Humanity and Goodness : And if that Promise, that *the Meek shall inherit the Earth*, as *Grattius* expounds it, is to be understood of Friend-

ships and Alliances, which are the best of all earthly Possessions, and serve to sweeten and secure all the rest : Then sure he must have the clearest Title to the Inheritance, whose Temper and Demeanour is such, as must needs procure him Friends, and can never provoke any Man to be his Enemy. And if, for his greater Trial, he should be constrain'd to *sojourn in Mesèch, and dwell with those who hate* Psal. cxx. Peace ; Men so inhuman and barbarous, that no Courtesy will win, nor Kindness oblige them : yet still he can retreat into himself, and put on the *Christian* Armour of Patience, and like an experienced General, gain Time of the Enemy by Delays, till at last he tires him out by Long-suffering, and entirely defeats him by Forgiveness. And this is the first Advantage of a *peaceable* Disposition, that it makes a Man happy in the undisturb'd Enjoyment of himself, and yields him such Contentment, as even a peevish and quarrelsome World can never rob him of.

2. It is the best Cement of civil Society, and that makes our Lives easy and comfortable, safe and secure, one among another. For what else is implied in that tacit Compact,

SERM.
VIII.

pact, upon which all Societies are originally
 founded, but that Men should live *peaceably*
 and amicably together, in mutual Confidence;
 that they shall not be molested in the Possession,
 each Man of his Patrimony or his Purchase;
 that they shall not be injured in their Estates,
 Persons or good Names; that they shall not be
 obstructed in the Prosecution of their lawful
 Business, nor disturb'd in the Enjoyment of their
 innocent Pleasures, nor in any thing vexatiously
 and needlessly cross'd or oppos'd, aggriev'd or
 annoy'd; but expecting on the other hand, all
 Justice and Equity, all that is humane, friendly,
 and beneficial, each from other, so far as may
 be without any manifest Inconvenience to the
 Person from whom it is expected, or the Detriment
 of some third Person? And when these fundamental
 Laws of Society are well observed, when Men
 are upon these Terms, and *dwell thus in Unity together,*
how joyful and pleasant a Thing it is? How free
 and happy do they live? free from slavish Fear,
 from the Torments of Jealousy, and the Alarms
 of Danger; and happy in a delightful Conversation,
 and the mutual good Offices of Love and Friend-
 ship,

ship, which they are ready to do one for ano-
ther.

On the contrary, when every Man is against
his Fellow, scrambling for Wealth and jostling
for Honour; and in order to compass what
he aims at, supplanting his Neighbour, in-
vading his Right, wounding his Reputation,
and not sparing his very Person, if he stands
in the way of his ungodly Designs and law-
less Attempts; I say, when things are in
this Posture, the very Form of all social Go-
vernment is subverted, and its wise Ends de-
feated. And a Forest of wild Beasts would
be a better Habitation than such an ill-go-
vern'd Commonwealth: For in the Thick-
nesses of a Defart, a Man might possibly hide
himself from the Fury of the Lion and the
Bear: But in the midst of a Company of
savage Men, who are continually *seeking to*
devour one another, there can be no Security.
And this therefore is another great Advan-
tage of a peaceable Disposition, that it con-
tents and supports, and makes our Lives easy
and secure under them.

3. It makes for the Honour and Advance-
ment of Religion. For it proves that it is
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SERM.
VIII.

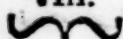
not an empty Name, but that it has real and excellent good Effects upon Mens Lives and Manners. It shews that it is not mere Presence, but *full of Mercy and good Fruits, without all Hypocrisy*: that it is not a naked notional Faith, but a *Faith that worketh Love*, and sheweth itself by its Works. And when Men do thus *walk worthy the Vocation wherewith they are called, with all Lowliness and Meekness, with Long-suffering, forbearing one another in Love, endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace*. It is not only an Ornament to the Profession of Christianity, but it redounds immediately to God's Glory; and the very Example is enough able most to convert an *Infidel*.

Ephes. iv.
1.

And so eminent and exemplary were the *Primitive Professors* in this respect, that the *Heathens* observ'd it with Wonder, and were wont frequently to cry out, "See how the *Christians* love one another." Not altogether unlike what is reported in Scripture upon another Occasion, when they lift up their Voice and said, *The Gods are come down to us in the Likeness of Men*, Acts xiv. 11. For as, with good Reason, they look'd upon that Power to be

more than human, by which St. Paul restor'd
him that had been a *Cripple from his Mother's*
Womb: so in this case, they might fairly con-
clude, that 'twas a Principle not merely natu-
ral (because 'twas what they never had experi-
enced in themselves) that could produce such
wonderful and unexampled Love. And 'tis
not improbable but this might put them upon
farther Enquiry into the Nature of that Reli-
gion, which taught its Disciples such excel-
lent Things, and was able to furnish out such
right Examples. And so, that which began
only in Wonder and Astonishment, might
happily end in their Conversion to the Faith
of Christ. This is certain, that the antient
Apologists do insist upon this (among others)
as an Argument of the Power and Excellency
of the *Christian* Religion, and make use of it
as a Motive to persuade Men to embrace it.
And indeed Affability and Courtesy, Mildness
and Gentleness, (Virtues which the *peaceable*
Man is very well practis'd in) must needs be
of singular Advantage, in proposing, applying
and enforcing the great Truths of Religion,
in order to instill them effectually into the
Minds of Men. For what comes from such
a Hand,

SERM.
VIII.

 a Hand, and is so gently administer'd, tho' not otherwise palatable, is yet kindly taken as from a spiritual Physician, who seems more over to have a tender Care and Concern for our Good. And therefore we find this all among the other Directions which St. Paul gives to *Timothy*, 2 Tim. ii. 24. *The Minister of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle towards all Men, apt to teach, patient, &c.* when (as Dr. Barrow well observes) *Gentleness*, and *Meekness*, and *Patience*, are made necessary Qualifications of him, that would be a successful Teacher of others, as being suitable Instruments ordinarily employ'd by God, to convert Men from Error to Truth.

And this gracious Temper is every whit as necessary in the *Learner*, as the *Teacher*; and unless he learns this Lesson first, all his other Instructions will go near to fall to the Ground. For he that is not *gentle* and *peaceable* is not charitable: And he that is not charitable cannot be truly religious. Let his outward Shew be never so specious; let his Gifts be never so great and eminent; let him boast of his Orthodoxy, and Soundness of Faith, or pretend to the strictest Purity and Sanctity; let him

speake

Speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels, and understand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge, yet if he has not Charity, he is nothing. For Charity is the Bond of all Perfectness, as the Apostle says, Col. iii. 14. In which those lovely Graces, Mercy and Kindness, Humility, Meekness and Long-suffering, are closely link'd together and contain'd: and they all depend on the Peace of God in my Text, as their first Mover; and where that bears rule, they are constantly exerted. And these are the things in which true Religion consists, according to the Description given of it in James iii. 17. The Wisdom which is from above, is first pure, and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of Mercy, &c.

And agreeably to this, *St. Paul* exhorts his *Romans* (xiv. 19) *to follow after the things wherewith one may edify another*, intimating, that whatsoever conduces to *Peace* and *Unity* does also tend to improve Men in real *Piety* and *Goodness*; whereas 'tis plain from the whole Scope of that Chapter, that wrangling and disputing (and that, as it often happens, in little and indifferent Things) does alienate

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SERM.
VIII.

Mens Affections, and give great Occasion of Scandal, ending for the most part in spiritual Pride, Cenforiousness, rash judging, and all manner of Uncharitableness; and consequently, preying upon the very Vitals of *Christianity*. And Oh that Men would be wise and consider this before it is too late! Oh that they would be made sensible of the blessed Advantage of Peace and Unity in this Respect!

Oh that they would endeavour to remove the Scandal that has been already given, and study to be like-minded, and to love one another, and to speak the Truth in Love, and by that means to adorn their Holy Profession, to win Souls unto God, and set forth his Glory. Then might we hope to see Religion flourish in the World, and produce as wonderful Effects as ever it did of old! Then might we hope to see the glorious Promises of Christ to his Church accomplish'd, even in our Days. Then would *the Wolf dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard lie down with the Kid, and the Calf, and young Lion, and the Fatling together, and a little Child might lead them, Isaiah xi. 6.*

4. But fourthly and lastly, another Advantage of a *peaceable Disposition* is, that 'tis the best Qualification, to render our solemn Services and Devotions acceptable, and successful with God, and beneficial to ourselves. For as the wise Son of Sirach saith, *Ecclus. xxviii.*

3. *One Man beareth Hatred against another, and doth he seek Pardon from the Lord? He sheweth no Mercy to a Man, who is like himself, and doth he ask Forgiveness of his own Sins?*

It were the Extremity of Folly and Impudence indeed, to dare to address to God for his Mercy, and hope to make our Peace with him, when we are at Enmity one with another, and foster Malice and Revenge in our Hearts: And therefore the *Apostle*, 1 *Tim. ii.*

8. requires, that *Men pray, lifting up holy Hands, without Wrath.* Intimating, that no Pretence to Piety or outward Formality, will be of any Avail at the Throne of Grace, unless we be in perfect Peace and Amity with Men: And our blessed Saviour himself has suspended the Forgiveness of our Sins, upon this very Condition, when he teaches us to pray: *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that trespass against us:* Nay he implies

SERM.
VIII.

plainly, that the positive and instituted Part of God's Worship will find no Manner of Acceptance, unless Men come qualify'd in this Respect. *Therefore, says he, if thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy Way; first be reconcil'd to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* Matt. v. 23, 24.

And the *primitive Christians* were so sensible of this, that they never assembled in Prayer, or to perform any other divine Office, but they first *greeted one another, with a holy Kiss*, as an Emblem of their mutual Love and Friendship; and particularly in celebrating the Lord's Supper, it was customary for the *Deacons* to give publick Notice, that they kiss and embrace one another, in Token of their Reconciliation each to other: And accordingly our *Rubrick* requires, that we be in perfect Charity with all Men: And this, in Concurrence with the other Qualifications requisite, will make us meet Partakers of those holy Mysteries.

And when we are thus united in our Affections, and Devotions both, we may expect

Consider'd and Explain'd.

311

SERM.
VIII.

pect to be graciously heard, and answer'd. For that Promise of our Saviour's, *Matt. xviii. 19, 20.* can import no less than his especial Presence in religious Assemblies, and his immediate Favour, Blessing and Assistance. *And again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on Earth as touching any Thing, that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in Heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.*

And when *Christian Love, Peace* and Amity are improved into spiritual Union and Communion, then are our holy Importunities most likely to meet with Acceptance and Success. *For if the effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man, one righteous Man availeth much,* sure the unanimous Petitions of a whole Multitude, that are as it were of one Heart and of one Soul, must needs be much more prevalent with God. And in this Respect therefore, a peaceable Disposition is of great Advantage, in that it will render our Devotions acceptable in the Sight of God.

Now to God the Father, &c.



S E R M O N IX.

Of Sacramental Communion.



I COR. X. 16.

The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? The Bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ?

SERM.
XI.

IT is obvious enough, that this Passage must needs relate to the *Holy Eucharist*, which was instituted by our dying Saviour, as the everlasting Memorial of his Cross and Passion. For what else can be meant by the *Bread* here mentioned? what else by the *Cup of Blessing*? but that very *Bread*, and that very *Cup*, which Christ himself first *bless*, and appointed continually to be *sanctify'd* by
Prayer

Of Sacramental Communion.

313

Prayer and Thanksgiving, as the commemorative Signs of his crucify'd Body, and his Blood poured forth for the Remission of Sins. SERM.
IX.

And what else can be understood by the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*? (of which the Apostle here speaks) but the Communication and Distribution of that *Bread* and that *Cup*, which when once consecrated to this Use, do significantly represent, and actually exhibit the *Body and Blood of Christ*, which are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper.

This therefore being taken for granted, I shall, in discoursing upon the Words,

I. Premise something concerning the Nature of this *Sacramental Communion*, and the more immediate Effects of it. And

II. I shall shew, that the *Fellowship* which *Christians* hold with Christ, and with one another in this *Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper*, is the proper Testimony, that they are faithful Disciples, and zealous Worshippers of the crucify'd Jesus, and true Members of his Body the Church. And

I. For the Nature of this *Sacramental Communion*: It consists in a real and effectual

SERM.
IX.

(his *Body broken*, his *Blood shed upon the Cross*) to those who are *meet Partakers of the holy Mysteries*. It consists, I say, in a real and effectual *Communication*; not by the Incorporation of Christ's human Body with the Elements of *Bread and Wine*: Not by the monstrous Conversion of those hallowed Elements into the natural Substance of his *Flesh* and his *Blood*: not in any such gross, or corporeal manner, but by spiritual Administration, accompany'd with divine Benediction, whereby the *Sacrifice of Christ's Death*, and *precious Blood-shedding*, is presented to the worthy Communicant, as the Object of his devout Meditation, his Wonder, his Love, his Faith and Affiance; and whereby all the Benefits of that meritorious Passion are insensibly convey'd into his Soul, to the great Increase of his inward Strength, and his marvellous Refreshment.

And that this is the true Notion of *Sacramental Communion*, I think I shall be able to prove, partly from the palpable Inconvenience and great Absurdity of that corporeal Sense in which both the *Lutherans* and *Papists* understand

Of Sacramental Communion.

315

SERM.
IX.

derstand it : and partly from the manifest Reasonableness and Congruity of this spiritual and mystical Interpretation. And

1. From the great Inconvenience of that corporeal Sense in which both the *Papists* and *Lutherans* understand it. I say, both the *Papists* and *Lutherans*; for according to them both, the natural and material Body and Blood of Christ are supposed to be given and received in the Blessed Sacrament, under or with the Elements of Bread and Wine; that is to say, either by the substantial Change of one into the other, or else by the substantial Union, and Incorporation of one with the other; both which Suppositions are equally inconvenient and absurd.

They are inconvenient, (1.) Because they derogate from the Efficacy and Excellency of the Gospel, which is a refin'd Institution, made up entirely of Grace and Truth, and Spirit and Life; and in this Respect both infinitely different from and preferable to the burdensome Ceremonies, the faint Types and Shadows, and all the carnal Ordinances of the Law; for they were able to sanctify no farther than to the purifying of the Flesh; but

SERM.
IX.

'tis the Blood of Christ alone, *who through the eternal Spirit*, offer'd himself without Spot to God, (Heb. ix. 14.) *that can purge our Conscience from dead Works to serve the living God.* 'Tis this alone that is the never-failing Source of Pardon and Grace to penitent Sinners, and a *Well-spring of Spiritual Life* in this World, and *Life everlasting* in the World to come.

And as the spotless Sacrifice of Christ was offered through his eternal Spirit, and deriv'd all its Value and its Virtue from the Divinity of his Person, so when the blessed Effects of it are graciously tender'd in the Holy Sacrament, 'tis but reasonable to suppose, that what issues from the *Spirit of God* is to be received by the *Spirit of Man*, as being the only capable Subject of so divine a Favour; for 'tis the Soul alone that can *eat and drink spiritually*, that can relish this Food, which the Angels themselves never tasted, and assimilate and turn it into real Nourishment by profound Faith and Reverence, by ardent Affection and Devotion, by true Repentance and Perseverance.

And

And on the other hand, it were a gross Conceit, and impious, to imagine, that the Flesh is in this Case a necessary Instrument of Conveyance, and that God has no other way to impart his Heavenly Influence, as if the *Body and Blood* of Christ could not otherwise avail to the Salvation of Men, than by being tasted and chew'd, and swallow'd and digested even as our ordinary Food.

And for this Reason, I say, 'tis a very inconvenient Sense into which both the *Papists* and *Lutherans* resolve this sacred Mystery; because it restrains God to the Use of such Means, as to all Appearance are the most improper of any, and makes this solemn Evangelical Rite, to work its Effect *after the manner of a carnal Commandment, and not after the Power of an endless Life*, Heb. vii. 16.

2dly, There is another Inconvenience still behind, every whit as untoward as this; and that is, that these gross Opinions do minister too much Occasion of Scandal both to *Jew* and *Gentile*, and indeed to all Mankind in general; and that in respect both of the Idolatry and Barbarity which they plainly countenance. As for the *Jews*, 'tis well known how directly

SERM.
IX.

rectly they were warn'd against Idolatry, even tho' it were usher'd in with all the deceitful Pomp of *Signs* and *Wonders*, and how strictly they were enjoin'd to abstain from all manner of Blood, even of Beasts. And should any Man go about to persuade them to worship the Bread and Wine they are to eat and drink, no doubt they would shun it like Poison. And should you endeavour to remove the Scruple, by saying, that tho' it appears to be Bread and Wine, it is indeed the natural Flesh and Blood of Christ, by a miraculous Conversion; this would add Strength to their Prejudice and Reason too. But should you press the Invitation further, and say, that 'tis the very Body and Blood of the *crucify'd Messiah*, which is thus prepar'd as a delicious Banquet for all good *Christians*, and those who are willing to be such; this would be so far from reconciling them to a suffering Saviour, that That which was already a Prejudice but too unhappily confirm'd, would doubtless become an utter Abomination to them.

In like manner, were any one to invite a *civilized Heathen* to such a *monstrous Feast*,

Nature

Of Sacramental Communion.

319

SERM.
IX.

Nature would immediately shrink at it, and the very Mention would beget a Loathing and Averfion. But should he be told, that 'tis his God, whose Body he is to tear afunder with his Teeth, and whose Blood he is to drink; this would shock him still more, and make him abhor it as a thing not only inhuman and unnatural, but impious and detestable.

For, first to adore, and then to devour, argues a Degree of Stupidity beyond the meer Worship of Idols, and perhaps 'tis what is without Example, even amongst the greatest Barbarians. But to be sure any well-nurtur'd Heathen would be induc'd to think, that his own Religion (such as it is) is much more humane, much more rational than this comes to, and would not suffer himself to be persuaded to partake of such a horrible Sacrifice, and serve God in spight of Nature.

And sure that must needs be own'd to be a very inconvenient Sense of *Sacramental Communion*, that in Practice implies an unexampled Barbarity, that is shocking even to human Nature, and a most abominable Idolatry, that is Matter of Scandal not to the

Jew

SERM.
IX.

Jew alone, (that were a small thing) but even
 to the *Idolater*. But

3dly, The most intolerable Inconvenience of all is, that such Doctrines do manifestly undermine the very Foundations of *Christianity*; for the *Christian* Religion, as it is a Revelation of God, is built upon Testimony, and that Testimony confirm'd by Miracle. But a Miracle could be no manner of Argument, unless Men were allow'd to believe what they see; and yet if there be any Truth in that most astonishing Miracle of Christ's corporal Presence in the Sacrament, there is no Credit to be given to our Eyes, nor any of our Senses; and consequently the Authority and Certainty of all other Miracles must fall to the Ground. The Resurrection of Christ is recorded indeed in Scripture as an extraordinary Miracle; and he himself appeals to his Disciples concerning the Reality of it: *Behold (says he) my Hands and Feet, that it is I myself; for a Spirit hath not Flesh and Bones as ye see me have*, Luke xxiv. 39. But if we examine it, this is no more than the bare Evidence of Sense, to which the more wonderful Miracle of which we are speaking is a flat

Con-

Of Sacramental Communion.

321

SERM.
IX.

Contradiction ; and therefore if the one be true (which God be thanked is impossible) the other must, or may at least be false, which would be Blasphemy but once to imagine : However this may more than suffice to shew the great Inconvenience of understanding Christ's Presence, and Communication of himself in the holy Eucharist after a corporeal Manner ; the palpable Absurdity of which remains briefly to be consider'd. And

That it is most notoriously absurd will appear,

1. Because 'tis utterly inconsistent even with the Words of Consecration, and other the Circumstances of the Institution ; for, as for these Words, *This is my Body, This is my Blood*, (which are supposed to be big with this Wonder) whatever the Meaning of them be, 'tis impossible they should be literally understood of the natural Body and Blood of Christ ; for altho' it was before his Passion, he speaks expressly of his *Body* as then *broken*, and his *Blood* as then *shed* ; which in a literal Sense it was not, it could not be ; he being yet alive, his Body entire and unmain'd, and his Blood contain'd within its proper Chan-

nel.

SERM.
IX.

nel. Besides it was apparently the *Bread* which he *took into his Hands, and blest and brake and gave to his Disciples* : it could not therefore upon any Terms be his *Body*, unless he had two *Bodies* ; one to distribute piece-meal among his Followers, before his Crucifixion, another to offer upon the Cross afterwards. But this is an Imagination so very wild, that I think 'tis hardly yet got into the Catalogue of *Heresies*. Moreover, as he *took the Bread*, so he *took the Cup* ; and if the *Bread* did immediately upon Consecration become his *Body*, and that according to the Letter ; then the *Cup* also (not the Wine, but the *Cup*, for we are to keep to the Letter) must in like manner be made his *Blood*. And this is an Inconsistency, which the Defenders of the Corporeal Presence will find it hard to get rid of. So impossible a thing it is to reconcile one Absurdity with another, or even the Sacrament with itself, according to their Rate of interpreting. But

2. The Absurdity of any such Interpretation is so much the more monstrous, because it is altogether incompatible with the essential Properties of *Body*. This might be made

out

out in many Particulars, but I shall instance only in what first offers.

And amongst other the Properties of Body, these are known to be inseparable: First, that all Bodies are finite, and consequently must be circumscribed within some certain determinate Space. And secondly, that as consisting of Length, Breadth and Depth, they must of Necessity take up so much Space as is commensurate to such their Bulk; neither of which can be made to stand peaceably together, either with the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, or *Consubstantiation*; for if Christ be in any wise corporeally present in the Sacrament, then must his Body be, not only at God's right Hand in the highest Heavens, but also in many thousand different Places upon Earth at one and the same time; which to a finite Substance, as all Bodies, whether glorify'd or not glorify'd, necessarily are, is a thing impossible.

Again, if the Body natural and organical of Christ be in any wise convey'd in, with, or under the Elements of Bread and Wine, it will unavoidably follow, that the Proportion of five Foot in Length, may extend no farther

SERM.
IX.

ther than three Barley-Corns, and that the greater may be contain'd within the less which to a material Substance, as all Bodies are, as well those which are glorify'd, as those which are not, is equally impossible.

It were endless to pursue all the Absurdities that spring from this *teeming Monster*. But what I have briefly hinted may suffice to shew the absolute Impossibility of Christ's bodily Presence in the Sacrament.

And yet, notwithstanding we hold the Apostle's Conclusion, *that the Cup of Blessing which we bless, is the Communion of the Blood of Christ, and the Bread, which we break, is the Communion of the Body of Christ*; that is to say, that it is the real and effectual Communication of his Body broken, and his Blood shed upon the Cross, with all the comfortable Influences of both upon the faithful, the penitent, the humble, and the thankful Soul.

And as this is the true Notion of *Sacramental Communion*, as it may be rationally presum'd from the Inconvenience and Absurdity of those Opinions that are set up against it: so it will be more abundantly plain from the Congruity and Reasonableness of this spiritual Interpretation.

For 1st. It agrees exceeding well with the Words of the Institution, compar'd with the manner of speaking that is familiarly used in the Holy Scripture, and especially in the Case of *Sacraments*: For a *Sacrament* being a sensible Sign, it frequently passes in Scripture-Dialect, under the Name of the thing signify'd; in which, perhaps, the gracious Intent of the Holy Spirit might be to give the meet Partaker so much the greater Assurance of the Blessings annexed thereunto; as if the Sign and the Thing signify'd were in effect one and the same. But however that be, the Examples of it are frequent; for instance, in *Gen. xvii. 10.* it is expressly said of *Circumcision*, *This is my Covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy Seed after thee—Every Man-child among you shall be circumcised.* And yet it follows in the very next Verse, *and ye shall circumcise the Flesh of your Fore-Skin, and it shall be a Token of the Covenant between me and you.* Thus again, *Exod. xii. 11.* it is said of the Passover that was then instituted—*And thus shall ye eat it; with your Loins girded, your Shoes on your Feet, and your Staff in your Hand; ye shall eat it in haste; it is the*

SERM.
IX.

Lord's Passover. And yet we read in the 14th Verse, *that it was to be to them only for a Memorial of that truly memorable Night, when the Lord smote Egypt, but passed over the Israelites, and suffer'd not the Plague to be upon them to destroy them.* And in Allusion to this, and by the same sort of Figure is that of St. Paul, 1 Cor. v. 7. *Christ our Passover is sacrific'd for us.* And by the same Analogy our blessed Lord, when he instituted this solemn Feast, said to his Disciples, *This is my Body that is broken for you, and This is my Blood that is shed for you.* That is to say in true Sacramental Sense, This is the Sign or Token which I have appointed for a perpetual Memorial of my *Body and Blood* to be offer'd up in Sacrifice for your Sins; and this is it that I require you to do in remembrance of me. And as upon the due Observance of these *Sacramental Rites* among the *Jews*, the People were entitled to all the Privileges of that Covenant, which God made with *Abraham*, and all other his precious Promises; so in like manner, the worthy Partakers of these *Christian Mysteries* are especially interested in, and invested with all the inestimable

inestimable Benefits that were the Purchase of the Blood of the Son of God. So consonant is that Sense which I have given of *Sacramental Communion*, not only to Scripture Expression, but even to the Nature and Intendment of a Sacrament. SERM.
IX.

But 2dly. It is also highly reasonable, in that it sufficiently makes good all that can be looked for in a *Sacrament*, and answers all the great Ends and Effects of it. For what is there that the pious Soul can desire, which is here wanting? Wou'd the real Presence of Christ be any Satisfaction, any Comfort to the devout Communicant? Behold! Here he is visible to the Eye of thy Faith; behold here he is even within the Embraces of thy Love, and at the same time adding Strength to that Faith, and Fervency to that Love, which prepare the Heart for his Reception. Behold here he is! nearer than Sense can judge of, even in *thy inward Parts, creating a clean Heart, and renewing a right Spirit within thee*; perfecting those Graces he has already conferr'd upon thee, and ratifying that Pardon which he has purchased for thee. Thus virtually, thus efficaciously, thus divinely, is

SERM.
IX.

Christ present in the *Holy Sacrament*; and therefore sure he must be really present; really, I say, tho' not locally so; for (as a judicious Divine observes, Dr. *Jackson*, Vol. III. p. 307.) "Christ might be locally present, " as he was with many here on Earth, and yet " not really present: but with whomsoever " he is virtually present, that is, to whom- " soever he communicates the Influence of " his Body and Blood by his Spirit, he is really " present with them, tho' locally absent from " them."

And, blessed be God, we have in the consecrated Elements the undoubted Pledge of his *Body* and *Blood*, the saving Influence of which, no Distance of Place can remove or intercept. For as the glorious Body of the Sun does actually cherish and enliven the Earth, by the kindly Warmth that is constantly imparted by his Beams, and yet quits not that *superior Orb* in which he is placed; so (and much more effectually) does the glorified Body of Christ dispense its cleansing and its quickning Virtue to Believers here on Earth, even now that it is exalted to God's Right Hand, and everlastingly there enthron'd.

And

And being thus assur'd of the real and effi- ^{SERM.}
cacious Presence of Christ in the *Sacrament*, ^{IX.}

we cannot doubt of all the Advantages, the Blessings, and the Comfort annex'd unto it. For what can the most discerning Faith seek for, that is not here presented as Matter of Contemplation and Exercise? What can the hungry Soul long for, or the thirsty pant after, that this spiritual Banquet cannot furnish? Does any Man in good earnest resolve to renew his Covenant with God, and commence an inviolable Friendship with him? Lo here the *Lamb is slain*, the sacrificial Feast prepar'd; and he (and all such as he) are invited, are expected; and, if they come in the Sincerity of their Hearts, shall find a Welcome.

Does any Man purpose affectionately to keep up the Remembrance of his *crucify'd Saviour*, and *shew forth his Death* to God as well as Men, putting it as Incense into his Prayers, and applying it as Balsam to his Wounds? Let him approach with Reverence, and see the Lord as it were still fresh and bleeding; — for here he may behold him with all the Benefit, all the Comfort, and without any thing

of the Terror and Horror of his bodily Presence.

Does any Man, in the Contrition of his Soul, long to find and feel the comfortable Effects, the sweet Refreshment of that Pardon which is promis'd to the true Penitent? See here is the Seal of the Promise, here is the Means of Application; let him taste and see that the Lord is gracious. Does any Man groan under the Sense of his Infirmities, hoping to be reliev'd and assisted in the Performance of his vow'd Obedience by the Aids of Divine Grace? Behold this is the Earnest of the Spirit, this the Instrument of Conveyance; let him come to this living Fountain, and his Soul shall be satisfy'd.

In one Word, let all the Weaknesses, and the Wants, the Hopes and Desires; nay, and even the Doubts and the Fears of the humble and sincere *Christian*, be summed up together, and I question not but he will find spiritual Supplies answerable to all his Occasions, if he be a frequent *Communicant* at the *Lord's Supper*; and I will only add, that Christ's virtual Presence, or the Influence of Life which descends from above upon the worthy Receiver

Of Sacramental Communion.

33 I

SERM.
IX.

Receiver in this *Sacrament*, is infinitely more available than the very *eating his Flesh*, or *drinking his Blood* (were it a thing practicable) could possibly be. For we have our Saviour's own Authority, that *it is the Spirit that quickneth; the Flesh profiteth nothing*, John vi. 63.) Upon the Strength of which, I may more safely conclude from what has been said, that That is the genuine Notion of *Sacramental Communion*, which makes it to consist in a real and effectual, but spiritual Communication.

And now having, as I hope, clear'd this Point, I shall proceed to shew,

2dly, That the Fellowship which Christians hold with Christ and one another in this *Sacrament*, is the proper Testimony that they are faithful Disciples, and zealous Worshippers of the crucify'd Jesus, and Members of his mystical Body the Church. And for the Proof of this, I need not make any wide Excursion; for it is the immediate Result of the Words of my Text, and the Foundation of the whole Argument of the Apostle in the Context.

And 1st. That it is the immediate Result of the Words of my Text, is plain at first Sight;

SERM.
IX.

for when the Apostle puts the Interrogation,
 “ *The Cup of Blessing, which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ? &c.* He does not propose it as a Doubt, but appeals to their own Knowledge concerning it, as a Thing that could admit no Dispute among *Christians*, which nevertheless he positively asserts, and confirms in the next Verse; for says he, *being many, we are one Bread, and one Body; for we are all Partakers of that one Bread.* That is to say, in partaking jointly of that hallowed Bread by which Christ is pleas'd to communicate the blessed Influence of his sacrificed Body to us, we are united into one mystical Body, the Church, of which Christ is the Head. And this Union with him as our Head, and one another as fellow Members, is as strict and close, as that of the Grain of which Bread is made after it is moulded into one entire Lump.

And this is it upon which he builds his whole Argument to dissuade the *Corinthians* from Idolatry: that is to say, from *Eating with the Gentiles* of those things which were offer'd in Sacrifice to their Idols, which had been in Effect to associate with them in their

idolatrous Practices, which he proves from ^{SERM.} parallel Cases, taken both from the *Jewish*, ^{IX.} and the *Christian* Worship. And the Reasoning lies thus; it is a thing well known among the *Jews*, that they *which eat of the Sacrifices* together with the Priest, are Sharers in the Service, doing Honour to God by Rites of his own Appointment, and at the same time sup-
plicating his Mercy and Favour. And the Case is known to be the same in the *Christian Eucharist*; for *by eating that Bread, and drinking that Cup*, we solemnly observe an Institution of Christ's, design'd to commemorate his Death, the Benefits of which are by this Means communicated to us. And therefore, (says the Apostle) *I wou'd not that ye should have Fellowship with Devils*, 1 Cor. x. 20.) as by Parity of Reason they must, if they had eat of the Sacrifices, because that wou'd imply that they join'd in the Worship of, and had Dependence upon them. And if there be any Strength in this Consequence, it is in virtue of the Premises; namely, that among the *Jews* and *Christians* there were Rites of religious Communion, which who-
soever join'd himself to, was supposed to own
himself

SERM.
IX.

himself of that Religion to which they belong'd.

This therefore under the Shelter of the Apostle's Authority we may take for granted: that to partake of the *Holy Eucharist*, is among *Christians* the proper Testimony of their Unity in the Faith and Worship of Christ, and being Members of his mystical Body, which will appear,

First, from the Nature of the Institution itself, which is a positive Rite, and therefore can be resolved into no other Reason besides the Wisdom and good Pleasure of the Imposer. The Duties of Justice, Charity, Temperance and the like, approve themselves to natural Conscience, and are binding upon that Account: But this is a Duty neither discoverable by the Light of Reason, nor obligatory by the Law of Nature; and therefore in observing it, we do more directly own, and submit to the Authority of Christ our Law-giver, which is the most acceptable Part of Subjection and Obedience.

2dly, This appears farther from the great Ends of the Institution; for it was appointed first, in Commemoration of the Death of Christ.

Of Sacramental Communion.

335

SERM.
IX.

Christ. Secondly, in Confirmation of the new Covenant sealed in his Blood. Thirdly, in order to establish an holy League of Love and Friendship with those our Brethren with whom we communicate. All which put together, does amount to the most solemn Profession of our Adherence to the *Christian Religion*, in all the essential Parts of it. For to believe Christ crucify'd, and to rely upon the infinite Merit of that Sacrifice, which he offered *for the Sins of the whole World*, is the *Characteristick* of a good *Christian*; and this we openly profess by commemorating his Death. And then by entring into Covenant with him, upon this Foot, we express our Desire of being entituled to the Benefits of his Passion, mutually engaging to perform the Conditions of Faith and Repentance on our Part required, and declaring that we expect Pardon, and Grace, and eternal Life, upon no other Terms but these; and this also is necessary to the Confession of a right Faith. Lastly, by entring into a Confederacy of mutual Love and Good-will, we not only answer the Design of a Feast, which is to promote Friendship and Charity, but we distinguish

SERM.

IX.

guish ourselves by that, which is the true
 Badge of our *Christian* Profession; for by this
 (says our blessed Lord) *shall all Men know that*
ye are my Disciples, if ye have Love one to
another, John xiii. 35. And hereby also we
 lay the surest Foundation of *Christian* Obe-
 dience: For *Love*, says the great Apostle, is
the Fulfilling of the Law, Rom. xiii. 10. there
 being no other Principle that will carry us
 evenly and uniformly through all the Instances
 of our Duty but this.

3dly and Lastly, That to partake of the
Blessed Eucharist, is the proper Testimony
 that we are faithful Disciples of the *Blessed Je-*
sus, is plain from the Judgment and Practice of
 the Primitive *Christians*. For they being bap-
 tized, as says the Apostle, *into the Death of*
Christ, Rom. vi. 3. by which they were re-
 deemed from the Bonds of Death, and entitl'd
 to a Resurrection to immortal Life, no doubt
 they must think it an Obligation more im-
 mediately devolved upon them, to celebrate
 the Memory of that meritorious Passion
 which was to them the Fountain of Life
 and Immortality.

They must, I say, they could not but think so, especially since it was the last solemn Command of the best Master, and the best Friend, their departing Saviour, that they should *do this in remembrance of him, and shew forth his Death*; that is, profess their Faith in him crucified, which was to the *Jews* a *Stumbling-block*, and to the *Greeks Foolishness*. And accordingly we find that the first Converts assign'd it a constant Place even in their daily Devotions; as being a special Branch of that Religion, and implying a formal Recognition of that Faith, to which they were converted.

And therefore (as we read *Acts ii. 42.*) *They continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine, and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers.* And as it may be gathered from Verse 46, this they did *daily*; and thus in all probability they continued to do in the next succeeding Ages, as often at least as they assembled together, and as long as that ardent Zeal and Love, with which the Hearts of the first *Christians* were inspired, was kept up in its Warmth and Vigour.

Nay,

SERM.

IX.

Nay, it was held so necessary a Part of Religious Worship, that according to the *Apostolical Canons*, whosoever was present at the other Offices, and absented himself from the Lord's Table, was threatned with Excommunication. And so much Strefs was laid upon their mutual Communion in the Sacrament, that it was customary among the Bishops, to send the *Eucharist* to each other, as a Token of that common Faith and Charity, which they thought themselves bound inviolably to maintain, notwithstanding any lesser or lighter Difference. And this I hope may be sufficient to shew, that the Fellowship which *Christians* hold with *Christ*, and with one another in this *Sacrament*, is the proper Proof, that they are the faithful Disciples of *Christ*, and Members of his *mystical Body*, the *Church*.

And now if your Patience can bear it, I would willingly make an Inference or two, and so conclude.

First then, if that be the genuine Notion of *Sacramental Communion*, which I have endeavour'd to establish in the former Part of this Discourse, then is this sacred Ordinance

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and indeed the whole *Christian* Religion most shamefully exposed and vilified, partly by the Abettors of Christ's corporeal Presence, and partly by those in the opposite Extreme! For as for the Abettors of the corporeal Presence, the *Papists* particularly, they are so fond of the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, that rather than it should miscarry with all its Absurdities, they make it a Miracle in spite of most of their Senses: But it is so lame a Miracle, and so ill prop'd up by *Legendary Tales*, that were it possible to be true (as it is not) it would supplant the Credit of all other Miracles besides, and render them not only useless but ridiculous. On the contrary, the *Socinians* are so far from subscribing to this, that they will scarce allow any thing of Reality in the Sacrament, but make it to be an empty Sign, a naked Ceremony, as void of *Grace*, as they suppose the whole Gospel to be of *Mystery*, and no more instrumental in conferring it, than so much *grave Table-Talk* might be, and the *Grace Cup* that comes after it. And yet tho' they seem to be at so wide a Distance from *Transubstantiation*, they could be well content it should stand or fall with

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SERM.
IX.

the *Trinity*; industriously dissembling the mean while, that the one is contrary to Sense, where the Appeal lies to Sense, and the other only too hard for Reason, in a Matter that is clearly out of its Cognizance. That the one is repugnant to the known Properties of finite Body, which is more than the other can be said to be, to those of an infinite, uncreated Spirit: In a word, that the one is utterly impossible, and cannot be as is pretended, the other only incomprehensible, (as it must needs be) to our shallow Conception, and yet notwithstanding, may well be, as in Scripture it is represented. And all that can be gathered from the odious Comparison is, That they are equally injurious to the common Cause of *Christianity*; both those who unwarily give the Occasion of Scandal, and those who craftily take, and maliciously wrest it.

Secondly, If the Sacrament be the proper Mark and Badge of our *Christian* Profession, and of our Union and Communion with Christ our Head, and with our Fellow Members: What shall we say or think of those, who live securely in the open Neglect of this Holy Mystery, and yet (which is strange) can call them-

Of Sacramental Communion:

34 F

SERM.
IX.

themselves *Christians*. Sure I am, that in the primitive Times, it was justly esteemed the highest Privilege of a *Christian*, and to be deprived of it was one of the heaviest Censures the Church could inflict, insomuch that they could not die in Peace, except they were first restored.

How comes it to pass, that Men can now a-days sit down with Patience, under so severe a Penalty? What can the Meaning be of all this Coldness and Indifference? Is it that the Thing itself is indifferent, which the Scriptures make of that Weight and Moment, that *St. Paul* receiv'd it from the Lord by immediate Revelation, notwithstanding he had left it as his special Command with the rest of the *Apostles*? Is it that we are under no farther Obligations to remember our dying Saviour? Is it that there is no Virtue in his Death, no Benefit, no Comfort in these precious Pledges of his Love? or is it that Men are willing to retain the fashionable Name of *Christian*, without taking up the uneasy, and as they hope, the unnecessary Burden of a holy Life, which they are afraid this Sacrament would bind upon them? If this be the

SERM.
IX.

Case, it were better to renounce their *Christianity* once for all, than pretend to the Name, and yet live in the open Violation of That, which they cannot but know to be *their bounden Duty and Service*. For I make no Scruple to say, That it shall be *more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah at the Day of Judgment*, than for such loose and dissolute *Christians*. For the Neglect and Contempt of these Means of Grace (which are also the *Earnest of our Redemption*) is a Sin that has all the Aggravation that the foulest Disingenuity and Ingratitude, and the boldest Profaneness and Presumption can give it.

And next to the Contemners of these holy Mysteries, are those Men who *raise Scruples*, Good God! *Conscientious Scruples* about the Posture of receiving, and refuse to take this *Blessed Sacrament* (as in all Humility they ought) meekly kneeling upon their Knees, for fear of Idolatry. And yet (to shew that this is a Scandal taken, and not given) our *Rubrick* does expressly declare, "That to
" take away all Occasion of Dissension and
" Superstition, which any Person hath, or
" might have concerning the Bread and
" Wine,

"Wine, it shall suffice, that the Bread is
such as is usual to be eaten.

"And lest the same Kneeling should by
any Person, either out of Ignorance or
Infirmity, or Malice and Obstinacy, be
misconstrued or depraved, it is hereby
declared, That thereby no Adoration
is intended, or ought to be done, either
unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine,
there bodily receiv'd, or to any corporal
Presence of *Christ's* natural Body and
Blood, &c." And to prove, that Conscience
is nothing concern'd in these Scruples,
even these very Men who condemn our Worship
as idolatrous, and separate from our Assemblies
on that Account, can make this solemn Religious
Rite subservient to a secular Interest, and
communicate with us upon special Occasions,
when it is to qualify themselves for some Place
of Honour or Profit: And this occasional Communion
of theirs, if they pretend to be guided by Conscience,
is a plain Acknowledgment that they hold the
Thing lawful, and that renders their Separation
at other Times inexcusable. But if they do it
without once consulting their

SERM.
IX.

Consciencs about it, with the same careles Indifference that they would any other Action, then is their Profanation most abominable.

To conclude ; Let us, who are otherwise perswaded, and have the happy Opportunity of approving ourselves the zealous Worshippers of the *crucified Jesus* in this Holy Sacrament, let us approach with stedfast Faith, but awful Fear ; and let us devoutly adore, not the bodily Presence, but the glorified Person of our dear Redeemer, who tho' exalted to God's Right Hand on high, deigns nevertheless to present himself to us in this Mystery ; of which, if we take care to make ourselves *meet Partakers*, we do thankfully testify to God and the World, that we are the very Members of Christ's mystical Body the Church, and also Heirs through Hope of his everlasting Kingdom, by the Merits of that precious Death and Passion which we commemorate. Which God of his infinite Mercy grant, &c.

Now to God the Father, &c.

SERMON



S E R M O N X.

Of Christ's Humiliation.

A Farewel Sermon at St. Laurence-Jewry,
March 23. 1724.



P H I L I P P. II. 5, 6, 7, 8.

5. *Let this Mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus :*
6. *Who being in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God :*
7. *But made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men :*
8. *And being found in Fashion as a Man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross.*

I N these remarkable Words we have the SERM:
clearest Moral arising out of the deepest X.
Mystery ; which, whilst we believe and

SERM.
X.

wonder, doth at once instruct, oblige, and incite us to copy, in human Proportion, after the *peerless* Original of God incarnate, and studiously to imitate those his peculiar Graces, which shone forth, and shewed themselves most amiable to behold, even through the Veil that was cast over his Glory in that State of voluntary *Exinanition*, and Humiliation here described : ——— when *Christ Jesus, who subsisting in the Form of God, thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, and yet emptied himself, taking on him the Form of a Servant, being made in the Likeness of Men : and being found in Fashion as a Man, humbled himself, and became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross.*

Which Passage of Scripture is, in St. Chrysostome's Judgment, a sort of two-edged Sword, sharp and strong enough, if skilfully managed, to cut down and confound all the *Heresies* that had been advanced concerning the Nature and Person of the *ever-blessed Jesus* : and Zanchius reckons up no less than thirteen of these *Heresies*, ancient and modern, against which it may be dexterously turned.

But I intend not to enter into so wide a Field ^{SERM.}
of Controversy : I shall confine myself to ^{X.}
such Observations and Deductions, as are most
obvious and easy, and may serve best to il-
lustrate the Text ; and at the same time to
confirm your Faith, and influence your Prac-
tice.

In pursuance of which Design, I shall

- I. Consider and compare the transcendent
Greatness, Dignity, and Glory of the Per-
son, so emptying, and so humbling himself,
as the *Apostle* sets forth, together with the
several Steps, and the prodigious Stoop of
this his Self-Abasement.
- II. I shall urge, and enforce the Exhortation
grounded hereupon in diverse Particulars,
which are either directly implied, or may
be fitly inferred.

As concerning the transcendent Greatness,
Dignity, and Glory of the Person, *Christ Je-
sus*, there are three things observable from the
Text.

1st. That he had a real Being or Sub-
sistence, antecedent to his Incarnation. 2^{dly},

SERM.
X.

That he subsisted in a Nature far more excellent than that which he afterwards assumed; and that therefore this his Nature in which he subsisted was truly divine. 3dly, That as so subsisting in the divine Nature, he was, and is co-equal, and co-essential with the one Supreme God.

I. That *Christ Jesus* had a real Being or Subsistence antecedent to his Incarnation, is most evident: For the Text expressly says, *that being [or subsisting] in the Form of God, he thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men, and humbled himself, &c.* And all this Train of Thought and Action, necessarily pre-supposes the Being which is here asserted to him, since he that is not, can neither think nor act. And this Being must needs be real and substantial, not merely potential and future in the Decree of God, since it would be equally absurd to ascribe present positive Thought and Action to him that is not actually as yet existing, but only is to be hereafter. It cannot be denied therefore, but that he must of Necessity

have

have had an actual Subsistence, before he vouch- SERM.
X.
safed to be *made in the Likeness of Men*:
which might be enough to shame and silence
that whole Tribe of *Gainsayers*, who will al-
low him no other than a *metaphysical Entity*
in the divine Foreknowledge and Decree, 'till
the very time that he was *conceived in his Mo-
ther's Womb*.

But as he had a real Subsistence prior to this,
so he subsisted in a Nature far more excel-
lent than that of Man, which he afterwards
assumed. For he subsisted, as the Text ex-
presseth it, in the *Form of God*, which, as it
stands opposed to the *Form of a Servant*,
must imply Dominion, as the other doth
Subjection. And he is elsewhere styled *the
Lord from Heaven, the Lord of All, the
Lord of Glory*. And both the Glory and
Power with which he stood invested, were
so far superior to all that is human, that they
are not so much as compatible to any Crea-
ture. For he had a *Glory* (Co-eternal) with John xvii.
the Father, *before the World was*, and as co-⁵
existing with the Father, he had a Power ab-
solute and omnipotent, which he wonderfully
displayed in the Creation of the World. Of
which

SERMON
X.
 which we have this full decisive Testimony
 from St. John's Gospel, i. 1, 2. *In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the Beginning with God. In the Beginning, i.e.* when all things took their Beginning that had any, then was he pre-existing, and therefore could himself have no Beginning. And *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made :* and therefore he himself must needs be unmade. And this shews, that the Distance between the Nature in which Jesus subsisted before his Incarnation, and that he then assumed, is infinitely great, no less than that between the Creature and the Creator. The Strength of which Argument is sufficient to overthrow all the vain Speculations of a more refined sort of Hereticks, who are contented to place the Son of God at the Head of the Creation, and to suppose him endowed with superlative Excellencies above all other created Beings; but they dare not exalt him above the Rank of a Creature; they imagine there might possibly be a time when he was not; they are afraid to give him the *Attributes* of unlimited Eternity;

Of Christ's Humiliation.

351

SERM.
X.

Eternity ; which yet they might without all Scruple, if it be an *Attribute* essential to the Godhead. For

2. It is also observable, and most evident from the Text before us, that the Nature in which *Christ Jesus* originally subsisted, is truly divine ; inasmuch as he subsisted in *the Form of God*, and *the Form of God* bearing a direct Opposition, as it does, to the *Form of a Servant*, must, according to the plain Scope of the *Apostle*, require this very determinate Sense. For if, in *taking upon him the Form of a Servant, and being made in the Likeness of Men*, he did put on the real Nature and Essence of Man, then certainly as subsisting in *the Form of God*, he must also subsist in the real Nature and Essence of God. If the Assumption of *the Form of a Servant*, made him a true and perfect Man, (which no-body now a-days is *phantastick* enough to deny) then his Subistence in *Form of God*, must suppose him to be true and perfect God ; and it would favour rank of *heretical* Pravity to entertain the least Doubt of it.

And the Force of this Observation is not easily to be avoided or eluded, because the Expression

SERM.

X.

any other Sense, but what will soon appear to be improper and inconsistent.

For what else can be meant by *the Form of God*? It can never be understood (with *Erasmus* and *Grotius*) of any external Semblance, or sensible Exhibitions of the Deity by Acts truly divine, such as were the Miracles that *Jesus* wrought whilst he dwelt among us, in a Tabernacle of Flesh, in which Estate also, saith St. *John* (i. 14.) *We beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father*. It cannot, I say, be so understood, because, though the Word *Form*, taken by itself, may sometimes signify the external Appearance of a Thing, as it certainly does at others the internal Essence, yet *the Form of God*, the Expression used by St. *Paul*, is no where put for any such sensible Representation, or outward Manifestation of the divine Majesty and Power, as these *Criticks* would have it.

Besides, if the Expression itself were capable of this Sense, it would be a Sense altogether incongruous in this Place; because it is undeniable, that *Christ Jesus* subsisted in the *Form of God*, before he was made *Flesh*; and

therefore his being in that *Form*, could not commence or arise from any subsequent Acts done in the Flesh. SERM.
X.

It remains then, that the *Form of God* must here be understood of the divine Nature and Essence, in which the Son subsisted as the *Brightness of his Father's Glory*, and the *express Image of his Person*, substantially and essentially so, as being entirely possessed of all the Fulness of Perfection that belongs to the Divinity. And this

3. The next thing that the Text offers to our Observation will clearly establish; viz. That *Christ Jesus*, as so subsisting in the *Form of God*, was, and is *co-equal* and *co-essential* to the One Supreme God; for the Text is express, that *being in the Form of God, he thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*. "But, (as Bishop Pearson * argues admirably) no other Form beside the essential, which is the *Divine Nature* itself, could infer an Equality with God. *To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, saith the holy One?* There can be but one infinite, eternal, and

* *Exposition on the Creed*, p. 123.

SERM.
X.

“ independent Being ; and there can be no
 “ Comparison between that, and whatsoever
 “ is finite, temporal, and depending. He
 “ therefore who did truly think himself equal
 “ *with God, as being in the Form of God,*
 “ must be conceived to subsist in that one in-
 “ finite, eternal, independent Nature of God.”
i.e. He must, as co-equal, be also co-essential
 to the One Supreme God.

And the Exception of the *Socinians* to this
 Doctrine is frivolous, that from the Equality
 of Christ with God, it doth not follow that
 he is the Supreme God ; but rather the con-
 trary: because no one can be said to be equal
 to himself. For, as the afore cited Writer
 observes, with an Exactness peculiar to him-
 self, this is both the Language and Reason-
 ing of the *Geometricians*, who take care to be
 exact in both : With them the Basis of one
 Triangle is said to be equal to the Basis of
 another, when the same Basis is common to
 both. And with the like Propriety, *Christ*
 may be said to be equal in Nature and Essence
 to God, because they have both one and the
 same Nature and Essence.

* *Exposition on the Creed*, p. 124, in the Margin.

The Foundation therefore of Christ's Co-equality and Co-essentiality with God, is too solid to be shaken by such weak Cavils as this, or by any such slender Criticisms, as may be fetch'd from the Obscurity of an unusual Phrase, or some small Difficulty in the Grammatical Connexion of the *Apostle's* Words.

It hath indeed been suggested, that the Words which we translate, *He thought it not Robbery to be equal with God*, might more aptly be rendered, He assumed not, he coveted not to be look'd upon as God, (or he was not greedy or hasty to be honoured as God) but (which makes the Connexion easy, they tell us) emptied himself, &c. of the *Form of God*, and chose to conceal it under the humbler *Form of a Servant*. But it hath been sufficiently prov'd by the Learned *, and is as yet, I think, unanswer'd, that the Words, take them all fairly as they lie together, are not so much as capable of such a Rendering, at least not without much more forcing and straining, than can be objected to the received Construction. For the received Construction will run

* V. Hammond in *Loc. and Bishop Pearson's Exposition*, p. 123, 124, in the Margin.

SERM.

clearly enough, and with very little Harshness, after this manner—— *He thought it not Robbery*, i. e. no unjust Pretension or Usurpation, *to be equal with God*, (as knowing himself in Nature so to be) and yet (which is a Sense the Particle *ἀλλὰ* is used in sometimes) he emptied himself; that is, though conscious of his natural Right of Equality with God, he voluntarily departed from it, and submitted to a State of Inferiority.

And, if we attend to the Force and Scope of the *Apostle's* Reasoning, this must be the genuine Meaning of the Words, and no other. For he makes this the Ground of his Exhortation to Humility, that *Christ Jesus, who being in the Form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, humbled himself*. Now had Christ not been equal in Nature to God, it would have become him indeed, in Point of Duty and Decorum, not to aspire to an Equality with him, which was the Pride of *Lucifer*; but then this could never have been insisted on as an Example of extraordinary Condescension, merely to contain himself in the Rank suitable to his Nature. And again, had Christ been inferior in Nature to God

he must have been (as all Creatures are) entirely at God's Disposal, and not at his own, and consequently could not have been proposed as such a wonderful Pattern of voluntary Humiliation in taking human Nature upon him, which, on this Supposition, would have been the Lot and Part that God had appointed him, not that he had chosen for himself. Whereas in Truth, that which strikes us with Admiration, and incites us to Imitation, is, that a Person so transcendently glorious, who subsisted *in the Form of God*, and was co-equal and co-essential with him, should descend as it were from the Height of God-like Greatness, to those prodigious Degrees of Self-Abasement, which we come now, still wondering, to contemplate.

(1.) And the first Step of this his Self-Abasement is what is called his *Exinanition*. He *emptied* or lessened himself, and this the Text explains by his *taking the Form of a Servant*, and that again is farther explained by *his being made in the Likeness of Men*. Not that the *Deity* did or could undergo any real Diminution in this mysterious Dispensation; for *God is the same Yesterday, to Day and for ever*.

SERM.
X.

But as the Brightness of the Sun is still the same, though intercepted from our Sight by an *Eclipse* ; so did the Lustre of the Divinity remain undiminished and unchanged, though to us it might appear less, when veil'd over with Mortality, and shrowded in Obscurity. And yet even this seeming Diminution or Concealment of Glory must be a vast Condescension in the *dread Majesty of Heaven and Earth*.

For although he could not divest himself of his inseparable Attributes, could not put off his divine Nature, yet he assumed another into intimate Union with it that was infinitely below it. And in order to the mystical Union of the divine and human Nature in one Person, he that was begotten before all Worlds, and had no Beginning, vouchsafed to come into the World by the way of Conception, *The Son of God was made of a Woman, the Lawgiver himself, made under the Law ; the Lord of all, subjected to the Condition of a Servant, and cheerfully came to do the Will of God, in the Body prepared for him.* In a Word, the same Person thus sustaining both Natures, he that was equal to the Fa-

ther as touching his Godhead, became inferior to him as touching his Manhood; he that was all Riches and Fulness, in his worldly Condition, became poor and empty, he that *was all glorious within*, was, in his outward Appearance, mean and obscure.

Nay, so very mean was the Guise he chose to appear in, that it even drew Contempt upon him: *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* saith one, Mat. xii. 35. *Shall Christ come out of Galilee*, saith another, *out of which ariseth no Prophet?* John vii. 41, 52. They who survey'd him with the dim Eye of Sense, or the distorted one of Prejudice, could see no Form nor Comeliness, no Beauty in him that they should desire him. They could not see the least Ray of Divinity through the Interposal of so thick a Cloud. Even his miraculous Works could not pass for a Proof of Power divine: in vain did he appeal to them, as the Credentials of his Authority. His Godhead was so far from being acknowledged or revered on this Account, that he was look'd upon as the wickeder Man for it, and was stoned for Blasphemy, because, being a Man, he made himself God, John x. 33. the Blasphemers

SERM.
X.

~ selves being his Accusers : and they absurdly accused him of a *Confederacy with Devils*, even while he was casting out Devils, by the irresistible Word of his Power. And thus was he not only despised and rejected of Men, but he was made the Mark of popular Rage, loaded with all manner of Obloquies and Indignities, pursued with Malice implacable, hunted down at length by restless Persecution, and exposed a publick Spectacle, not of Pity, but of Scorn and Derision in the midst of Misery, of the extremest Misery Mortality could suffer.

But (behold the *Lamb of God*, how meek and lowly in his Innocence!) *when he was reviled, he reviled not again, when he suffered, he threatned not ; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously,* 1 Pet. iii. 23.

For (2dly) Having once descended from the Pitch of his celestial Glory, he thought fit to join his Patience as a Companion to his Humility and Innocence ; that he might finish the Work he had to do, and leave a more illustrious Example behind him : and therefore *being found in Fashion as a Man*, being cloathed with human Infirmary, though

not

Of Christ's Humiliation.

361

SERM.
X.

not stained with any Corruption, *he humbled himself yet farther, and became obedient unto Death*, Phil. ii. 8.

He had vouchsafed to take our mortal Nature upon him, and therefore he would not exempt himself from the Fate of other Mortals, but chose to submit even to a violent Dissolution, that so *by the Grace of God he might taste Death for every Man*, Heb. ii. 9. He had subjected himself to the Law, and therefore failed not to pay an entire Obedience to it, both active and passive. His Actions were so exactly conformable to the Rule, that he *fulfilled all Righteousness*, both ritual and moral, without the least Deviation in any Particular. And having thus fully satisfied the *Directive* Part of the Law, he could not in Strictness be a Debtor to the *Vindictive*: His Passion could not be due to his proper Demerit: *His Death* could not be the *Wages of his own Sin*. And yet he died, and died for Sin; *for our Sins, the Just for the Unjust. He came into the World to save Sinners*, 1 Tim. i. 15. and there was a whole World of Sinners to be saved, an unmeasurable Heap of unexpiated Guilt to be removed, God's in-

SERM.
X.

censed Justice to be appeased, his injured Honour to be repaired. But *without shedding of Blood there could be no Remission*, Heb. ix. 22. without a Sacrifice there could be no Satisfaction. And the *Blood of Bulls, and of Goats*, was insufficient to *take away Sins*, the Blood of Sinners was itself impure and wanted cleansing, and therefore the Blood of *Jesus* was to be shed, which, as the Scripture warrants us to speak, *is the Blood of God*, of God incarnate. The Blood of one adorn'd with the purest Innocence, and crown'd with infinite Dignity, and through the eternal Spirit *offer'd without Spot unto God*, was the only sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World.

And which now, O ye Sinners, will ye most admire and adore, the Vastness of the Condescension, the Tenderness of Compassion, or the Profoundness of Wisdom in this mysterious *Oeconomy*? That he *who knew no Sin* should be made Sin, or a Sacrifice for Sin! that he his own self *should bear our Sins in his own Body on the Tree*! That the Son of God should come down from Heaven, to ransom Sinners from Death and Hell, and that the

the Son of Man should be lifted up on the Cross to draw all Men after him to Heaven and Happiness! SERM.
X.

(3dly.) That Humility might make its very lowest Stoop, that *Patience* might have her perfect Work, *Christ Jesus* became obedient unto Death, and resigned even to the Death of the Cross; a Death imbittered with all the Gall and Wormwood, that Pain, Shame, and a Curse, could mingle together in the Cup.

For, not to take him up at his Entrance into the Garden, the first Scene of his Passion, not to mention the bitter Conflicts, the strong Agonies both of Soul and Body he there underwent, not to insist on the nearer Prelude to his Crucifixion, the Furrows of the Whip upon his Back, and the bloody Traces of the Thorns about his Temples, doubtless, when they came to fasten him to the Cross, the piercing of his Hands and Feet, Parts so nervous, with the Nails, and the Distension and Distortion of his tender Limbs, must, in a Body of so fine a Frame and Contexture as his, be attended with exquisite Torture, and that so much the harder to be born, because it kept him so long

SERM.
X.

lingring, and sensibly dying, and feeling the repeated Pangs of several Deaths in one.

But that which gave a new Sting to all his Sufferings was the Ignominy of his Punishment. For he was *crucified between two Thieves*, and he died the Death not only of a Malefactor, but a Slave ; for by the *Roman Law*, no Freeman, however criminal, was liable to so severe a Sentence ; and if at any Time, by a Stretch of Power, it was inflicted upon a *Citizen*, there was a loud Outcry against it, as the greatest Indignity and Barbarity. And among the *Jews*, who had no such legal Punishment as Crucifixion, that which comes nearest to it was in the Eye of the Law accounted execrable : *For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a Tree*, Deut. xxi. 23. Galat. iii. 13. And thus was Confusion added to the Affliction of this innocent but seemingly devoted Soul, who was not only, in the Opinion of Men, *stricken and smitten of God*, but even in his own Apprehension, almost deserted. The Pressure of the Sins of a whole World was so exceeding heavy upon his suffering Humanity, that with his expiring Breath he could not but utter himself with

strong

Strong Crying and Tears, saying, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* A Prayer then heard in that he fear'd, still heard in our behalf, in that *he ever liveth to make Intercession for us.*

And now behold and see if ever Sorrow was like unto his Sorrow, ever Confusion like to that with which he was covered, any Curse like to that he bore *in the Day of the Lord's fierce Anger?* But see too the marvellous Vouchsafement of heavenly Love and Pity! For us did he come down into the very Bottom of this *Vale of Tears*; for us did he undergo these unknown Sufferings and Torments: And *as he was wounded and bruised for our Iniquities, so by his Stripes are we healed*; his Shame is our Rejoicing, his Cross our Glory; and he hath seen the Desire of his Soul, and is satisfied.

And thus have I led you through the Contemplation of the Greatness, Dignity and Glory of *Christ Jesus*, the Person so lessening and humbling himself as the *Apostle* here sets forth, which I have compar'd with the several Steps and the prodigious Stoop of this his Self-Abasement,

And

SERM.

X.

And oh how one Deep calleth to another, in this Abyſs of Myſtery and Mercy! the Deep of Chriſt's ſtupendious Exinanition to the Deep of our profoundeſt Reverence and Adoration! O how are Words ſwallowed up, and our very Thoughts overwhelmed between the two! Blessed Lord! That *Chriſt Jeſus*, who ſubſiſted *in the Form of God*, and *was equal to him* (*without any Wrong or Robbery*) in all eſſential Perfection, ſhould deſcend from the Throne of his Majeſty in Heaven, and deign to pitch his Tent among us in a Corner of the Earth? That *the high, the Holy-One* and Infinite, *who inhabiteth Eternity*, ſhould make his humble Reſidence for nine Months Space within the narrow Encloſure of a *Virgin's Womb*! That the Effulgency of Light unapproachable, ſhould be over-ſhadowed with a Cloud, and through a Covering of Fleſh convey itſelf without dazzling to fleſhly Eyes! That the *Antient of Days* ſhould be born in time, the *Son of God* of the *Daughter of David*! That the Omnipotent ſhould be compaſſed with Weakneſs, the Immortal cloathed with Mortality! That the Prince of Life ſhould live in the Nature of a Servant, and

die

die a servile Death, as the vilest of Male-
factors ! That *the Lord of Glory* should be
traduced, vilified, derided, insulted, outraged,
crucified ! and this *for us miserable Sinners,*
who lay in Darkneſs, and the Shadow of Death,
that he might reſcue us from the Jaws of
Hell, and exalt us to everlaſting Life ! That
the loſt Sheep, who had wilfully wander'd,
ſhould be recover'd with ſuch infinite Pains
and Coſt, and even with the Loſs of the Shep-
herd's own Life ! That wretched Captives,
made ſo by their own ſlavish Conſent, ſhould
be redeemed at ſo ineſtimable a Price, even
the Blood of their Prince and Saviour !

*Lord ! what is Man that thou wert thus
mindful of him ? and the Son of Man that thou
thus viſitedeſt him ?* We bleſs thee, we wor-
ſhip thee, we glorify thee, we give Thanks
to thee for the peculiar Glory of this thy more
than princely Condeſcenſion, thy moſt aſto-
niſhing Diminution ; *Thy Name, O meek and
merciful Jeſus, is deſervedly exalted above every
Name : worthy, moſt worthy, is the Lamb
that was ſlain to receive Power, and Riches,
and Wiſdom, and Strength, and Honour, and
Glory, and Bleſſing, from all People, Nations,
and Languages,* Rev. v. 12.

And

SERM.

X.

And after having presented you with this View of the adorable Sufferer, from the Height of his Glory to the very Depth of his Humiliation, give me leave, I beseech you,

II. To urge and inforce the Exhortation grounded hereupon in some Particulars. But for Brevity-sake, shall only take the Moral that most immediately arises from the Text, and not follow it into any remoter Consequence, how pertinent soever.

Let the same Mind then be in you, as faith the Apostle, which was also in Christ Jesus, i.e. Be ye affected as he was, who, though he was in the Form of God, and thought it not Robbery to be equal with God, yet insisted not on this his natural Right of Equality; but made himself far less, and stooped even so low as to take upon him the Nature of a mortal Man (who is by Creation the Servant of God) and in that debased State, according to the Estimation of the World, lived as meanly and died as miserably as Mortal ever did.

I. And ought not this voluntary *Exinanition* of him, who was eternally possessed of equal Glory with the Father, before all things excite and engage us, who are God's natural

Sub

Subjects and Vassals, to abase ourselves in SERM.
the Sight of our great Creator, and to *walk* X.
humbly with our God, to humble our Under-
standings in the believing, and adoring those
inscrutable *Mysteries* he hath revealed, and
to bow our Wills to a Compliance with the
strictest and hardest of his Precepts : that so
every *Imagination may be cast down, and every*
high thing that exalteth itself against the Know-
ledge of God, and that every Thought may be
brought into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ,
2 Cor. x. 5.

For what if we are not able to declare
the ineffable Generation of God's eternal
Son ? what if we cannot comprehend the
manner of his miraculous Incarnation ? what
if we cannot bring the Sacrifice and Satis-
faction of his Death to square with our
narrow Thoughts and inadequate Concep-
tions of Things ? Shall we therefore vainly
begin to think the *Almighty* imperfect like
ourselves, because we cannot *find him out to*
Perfection ? or shall we pronounce his Ways
to be unequal, because we cannot adjust their
Equality by the partial Application of our
own crooked Rule ? Shall we therefore dis-

SERM. honour the Son, because he was so willing to
 X. honour the Father, by humbling himself?
 Or shall we attempt to humble him, as much
 as in us lies; yet farther, by degrading him
 to the Rank of a Creature, or bringing him
 down to the Level of mere Man, because *for*
us Men, and for our Salvation, he was content
 in great Humility to be made so? Or shall
 we dare to vilify him still farther, and pursue
 him into Heaven with our Contradictions and
 Blasphemies? Shall the *Apostate Christian*
Scorner outdo both *Jews* and *Heathens*, in
 questioning his Mission and Authority, in ex-
 ploding his Mysteries, in making a Mock of
 his Ordinances, in ranking him, I tremble to
 speak it, with *Impostors*, and *fictitious Deities*,
 his Acts and Monuments with their *Legends*,
 his Institutions with their Inventions; and
 lastly, (which I think is almost without Ex-
 ample till of late) in striking openly at the
 Heart and Life of all Religion, through the
 Sides of the *crucified Jesus*?

Certainly this is the most insufferable Piece
 of Arrogance, to dispute it with God about
 his own revealed Truths: this a most impious
 Sacrilege, to despoil both Father and Son of

Of Christ's Humiliation.

371

SERM.
X.

the Honour that is due unto them: this is the most outrageous Insolence, to *crucify the Redeemer of the World afresh*, and to make the very Thieves his Rivals, and his Equals: this is a most desperate Defiance to provoke him to his Face, who is coming to be their Judge, arm'd with Almighty Vengeance.

O how shall these *Sons of Giants*, this *forlorn Hope of Lucifer* appear, when the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, with his holy Angels. Then shall these mighty Men, these Captains of Infidelity say to the Mountains and Rocks, *Fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that sitteth on the Throne, and from the Wrath of the Lamb.*

2. The profound Humiliation of our Lord Jesus must needs powerfully incite, must (if we have any kind of ingenuous Shame, any Spark of Gratitude) effectually prevail with us to be always humble and condescending, always helpful and beneficial to our Brethren, even those of the lowest Estate and Condition.

For Christ not only made himself inferior to his Father, to whom he was in Glory equal, in Majesty co-eternal, but he demean'd himself

SERM.
X.

himself even to a Familiarity with us, so infinitely his Inferiors: he descended to the Rank and Condition of us his Creatures and Dependents. And in that humble Guise he disdained not any the meanest Office, that might yield us any valuable Benefit, or even afford us any useful Instruction. Of which St. *John* in Chap. xiii. ver. 3, &c. records this memorable Instance. *Jesus, saith he, knowing that the Father had given all things into his Power, and that he came from God, and went to God, He riseth from Supper and layeth aside his Garments and took a Towel, and girded himself. After that, he poureth Water into a Bason, and began to wash the Disciples Feet, and to wipe them with the Towel wherewith he was girded.* Conscious he was of his own Dignity and Power, but nevertheless officious to admonish them, and all Christians, of a Duty so little consistent with the Pride of Life, that there was need enough of so great an Example to enforce it: And remarkable as the Example was, there was need also, it should seem, of bringing it home to them by a particular Application, ver. 12, &c. *For after he had washed their Feet, and taken his Garments, and*

was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Lord and Master, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then your Lord and Master have washed your Feet, ye ought also to wash one another's Feet. For I have given you an Example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily I say unto you, the Servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater than him that sent him. And agreeable to this, he elsewhere advances a noble Maxim, quite contrary to the mistaken Sentiments and Practice of the World. *Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your Minister: And whosoever will be chief among you let him be your Servant.* Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and to give his Life a Ransom for many, Mat. xx. 26, 27, 28.

From whence we may justly infer, that one Christian is by Office as it were, a Servitor to another: yet our great Master's meek Example both teaches and obliges us so to be; that the Man who by the Advantage of his Fortune or Station in the World, his publick Character or personal Endowments is blest with greater

SERM.
X.

Abilities and Opportunities of doing good than other Men, is in Effect but a Minister appointed to serve so many the more, and has so much the more Work upon his Hands: That it is his Duty respectively to employ his Time, his Pains, his Skill, his Power, his Interest, in the Service of God's Church, of his native Country, of his Relations, his Dependents, his Friends and Neighbours, in one Word of any Fellow-Servant, *i. e.* of any Fellow-*Christian*, whose Wants in any kind he can relieve, or whose Benefit he can promote: That this, if Men had any Sense of what is truly honourable, and worthy of good Report, this is the Way to solid Greatness: That, even literally speaking, he *that will be great among Christians*, must, in order to it, *become their Minister*; he must purchase the Love, the Esteem, the Veneration of Mankind by Acts of Humanity, Courtesy, Generosity, Charity and Piety. These are Virtues like living Springs upon an Hill, that send forth their refreshing Streams upon the Vales beneath, and spread Verdure, Fragrance, and Fruitfulness wherever they flow. These are Deeds so truly great, because so truly good,

that

that the Condescension which usually attends them in the doing, at once adds to the Value of the Benefit, and the Dignity of the Benefactor. And that a more abundant Honour is due to such condescending Goodness, may be seen in that perfect *Mirror* of Humility, *Christ Incarnate*. His wonderful Abasement of himself did not, could not in any wise really lessen or degrade the Majesty of his *Eternal Godhead*, but the *Merit* of it purchased an Encrease of Glory to his *Humanity*, which he assum'd into a Personal Union with the Divine Nature. And therefore for this very Reason *both God highly exalted him, and given him a Name, which is above every Name*, Phil. ii. 9. And tho' no imperfect Copy of human Virtue can possibly come near the *matchless Original*, tho' no good Work of ours can be strictly meritorious, yet if we have Resolution enough to follow the *Captain of our Salvation*, at such Distance as our Infirmities will admit, if we are but enough resigned to learn of him, to the best of our Capacity, who was so perfectly meek and humble, both in doing Good, and suffering Evil, then shall *our Names* also be deem'd worthy *to be written*

SERM. in the Book of Life, then shall we be highly
 X. exalted both in the Favour of God here, and
 in the Glory hereafter to be revealed.

And now I have finished what the Time would allow me to speak upon my Subject; but before I wholly dismiss you, permit me, after 14 Years Labours among you, to plead the Excuse of Infirmary, for withdrawing from your Service, and to take my Leave with all Thankfulness, after having recommended you to God's more especial Benediction.

The little I would presume to say in my own behalf is only this: I have according to my Capacity, in all good Conscience, endeavoured to discharge my Office, altho' with too sensible a Mixture of human Frailty and Weakness, which if the Sincerity of my Intentions will not atone for, your Candour and Goodness will at least cover.

It hath been my constant Aim, Care and Study to *speake the Truth as it is in Jesus*, not *handling the Word of God deceitfully*, nor wilfully perverting or mistaking it; for, if I might borrow the *Apostle's Words*, *we can do nothing against the Truth but for the Truth*, 2 Cor. xiii. 8.

Of Christ's Humiliation.

377

SERM.
X.

It hath been no less my Care and Study to explain and enforce the Precepts of *Christianity* faithfully and impartially, without any undue Condescension or Indulgence to the Hardness of Mens Hearts, or any prevailing Corruption.

If any have been offended at my Plainness or Boldness of Speech, I hope I shall be forgiven that Wrong, because I should have been guilty of a much greater, if I had kept back any thing that was profitable for you, or spoke only as *pleasing Men and not God, which trieth our Hearts*, 1 Thess. ii. 4.

If any have profited by my Ministry (as notwithstanding the Meanness of the Instrument, I trust some may) let God have the Praise, and his Servant their Prayers.

And my Prayer to God for this great Congregation, from the highest to the lowest, shall always be, that God would *give you a bearing Ear, and an understanding Heart*, to discern between the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error, that ye may receive the Truth in the Love of it, and walk by its Light; *that proving all things, ye may still hold fast that which is good, and never fall from your*

SERM.

X.

Knowledge of the Divine Will in all Wisdom and Spiritual Understanding, *that ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good Work, and increasing in the Knowledge of God, Col. i. 19. and in every Grace abounding, till at Length ye arrive at Glory.*

And now the very God of Peace sanctify you wholly: and I pray God your whole Spirit and Soul and Body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.



T H E E N D.



AN ALPHABETICAL

I N D E X

Of the Principal Matters contain'd in the Eight
Volumes of Dean Moss's Sermons.

The Reader is desired to take Notice, that when any Figures are joined by a Rule —, the same Subject continues to be treated of from the former to the latter Page so connected.

A.

ABRAMHAM, his Descendents exempted from the
Condition of Slaves, Vol. VII. Page 292.

Absalom, VIII. 219.

Actions of free Agents made subservient to God's Purposes,
without offering any Force to their natural Freedom,
VII. 324.

Actors upon a Stage, and the Hypocrite compared, VII. 29.

Adam, in his Innocence placed in an earthly Paradise with
a Body of Flesh and Blood, in Nature mortal, but by
supernatural Grace fitted for Immortality, I. 274.

Adepti in occult Philosophy, II. 254.

Adonibezek, the various Significations, VII. 388, 389.

Adonibezek, VIII. 223.

Adoption, V. 368.

Aerius, II. 440.

Æsculapius, II. 254.

Agur, III. 466.

Aiah, V. 3, 17. VIII. 174, 175.

Ambition, gives the Inclination an unhappy Bent towards
Unbelief, II. 185.

— A hard Mistress, VII. 303, 304.

G c 4

Amen

Amen explain'd, III. 340—342.

Ammianus Marcellinus, his Account of a sudden Earthquake and Eruption of Fire, which interrupted the Rebuilders of the Temple at *Jerusalem*, II. 57.

Anabaptists pronounce it unlawful to swear, IV. 72.

Anger, not wholly unlawful, IV. 107—9. Defin'd, III.

How far Anger may be lawful in general, and in what particular Cases it is distinguished so to be. III—122.

When and for what Reason it becomes sinful, and in what particular Cases it is most notoriously so, 122—136.

Arguments to dissuade Men from indulging themselves in it, when it is sinful, 139—154. Remedies proper either to prevent, or cure the Irregularities of sinful Anger, and the Consequences which attend it, 154—164. Immoderate Anger disallowed by the Gospel, V. 197. The Punishment due to causeless Anger, VII. 164—166. Wherein the Formality of the Sin of causeless Anger does consist, 170—173. Anger may be causeless with Respect to the Ground or Occasion, 174, 175. With Respect to the Measure, 175—177. And with Respect to the Manner, 177—179. The Reasonableness of the Punishment due to causeless Anger, 180, 181. The Progress of Anger, 182. Capital in the World to come, 185. See *Revenge*.

Annihilation, I. 343, 361, 363—365. A sad and doleful Comfort, 376, 377—405.

Antinomians, their wild Conceits, VI. 216.

Antoninus, VIII. 24.

Anvil, II. 243.

Anxiety, and Carefulness about the Things of this World; what is meant by anxious Care, IV. 444—448. This Anxiety sinful both in itself and Consequences, 448—451. Not only sinful, but vexatious, 451, 452. Fruitless, 452—454. Frequently hurtful, and sometimes pernicious, 454, 455. Prayer with Thanksgiving a Sovereign Remedy against too great an Anxiety, 456—474.

Apologists. Some of them appeal to the Account of our Saviour's Miracles and Resurrection transmitted by *Pontius Pilate*, according to Custom, to the Emperor *Tiberius*, II. 55. VII. 355.

Apollo, II. 269.

Apollonius, II. 261. V. 391.

Apostles,

Apostles, their possible plausible Excuse against going to disciple all Nations, II. 225, 226. Their Character, 244.

Archimedes, VII. 309.

Arians, III. 369.

Aristotle, his judicious Distinction of angry Men, IV. 131—134.

Arius, II. 440. V. 246.

Arnobius, II. 265.

Asian and African Churches ruined by Schism and Faction, VIII. 388, 389.

Athanasius. Notes upon his Creed, III. 353. The Creed, ascribed to him though later than his Time, is yet admirably contriv'd to guard against the Revival of old Errors, and the Introduction of new ones, VI. 56.

Atheism. See *Enticement of Sinners*.

Atheists, their indefatigable Pains and impudent Mockery, II. 114. That a Society of Atheists might make a Shift to live comfortably enough together in the interchangeable Performance of good Offices. And the reasonable Practice of social Virtue, is a Paradox, that will never be confirmed, nor confuted from Experience, 201.

Athenagoras, II. 238.

Athenodorus, his Advice to *Augustus*, IV. 156.

Attestations, to our Saviour's Commission and Doctrine. By *John the Baptist*, II. 76, 77. By Visions, Apparitions and Voices, 77, 78. By the Power of Miracles, 78—82. And by the Gift of Prophecy, 82—85. To renounce the Belief of any thing, that has the undoubted Attestation of Miracles, is to renounce the divine Attributes, which is renouncing the Godhead, 165, 166.

Attitude, I. 200.

Augustus, his poignant Saying about *Herod's* Cruelty, II. 55.

Aulus Gellius, VII. 223.

Austin, St. inclin'd to think there was but one *Jupiter*, II. 9.

B.

BACCHUS, Vol. II. Page 10.

Balaam, his Wish that he might die the Death of the Righteous grounded upon an Assurance of a future Judgment, and a State of Rewards and Punishments after

after this Life is ended, VI. 199—203. And upon a Supposition, that the Righteous, as best qualified for the other State, must die with more Composedness and Comfort than other Men do. Which is evident from Reason, 204—206. And true in Fact, 206—210. The only safe and expeditious Way of bringing *Balaam's* Wish to good Effect, to die the Death of the Righteous, is to live the Life of the Righteous: This will appear from the Reason of the Thing itself, 211—213. From the express Terms and Conditions of the Gospel, 213—215. From the Fallaciousness and Insufficiency of any other Expedient that can be made use of, 215—225.

Bajazet, VII. 321.

Balbus, the Stoic, II. 10.

Barrow, Dr. his Observation upon the Qualifications of him, that would be a successful Teacher of others, VIII. 318.

Bathsheba, the beautiful Wife of *Uriah*, washing herself one Evening, is seen by *David*, with the Consequences thereupon, I. 2—7.

Beatitudes, VII. 418.

Bellarmino, VII. 184. See *Purgatory*.

Benefit. The Price of a Benefit raised by the Needfulness of it, I. 268—271. By the good Will of him that bestows it, 271—274. By the intrinsic Value of it, and the great Advantage accruing to the Receiver, 274—276.

Bernard, St. upon Omnipresence, VI. 376.

Beza, VI. 362. His Criticism upon *αριθμοί*, VII. 230.

Bigottry, and blind Zeal, kept back many of the Jews and Gentiles from embracing the Gospel, II. 106—111. The Power of Bigottry not impair'd by Age, it is still, and always will be one great Impediment to the Progress of the Gospel, and Reception of the Truth in the dark Corners of the Earth, 111—114. See *Gospel*.

Blood of God, II. 21. VIII. 374.

Βραβείον, An Agonistical Word, VIII. 287.

Bread, its Signification, III. 233. The Import of the Petition, *Give us this Day our daily Bread*, 233—251. The holy Affections of Soul that naturally arise from it,

it, and with which therefore it will be most properly accompanied, VIII. 251—257.

Brethren, applied to Ecclesiasticks as well as Laicks, V. 96, 97, 109.

Bull, Mr. III. 369.

C.

CÆSAR's Commentaries, Vol. II. Page 195.

Calves-Head Club, VIII. 122.

Candour and Innocence equal Strangers in the World, I. 35.

Canons Apostolical. By them, whosoever was present at other Offices, and absented himself from the Lord's Table, was threatned with Excommunication, VIII. 338.

Carondiletus, III. 367.

Carpocrates, II. 266.

Casuits. See *Elisha*.

Cato, in Practice avow'd the Community of Wives, II. 23, 24. See *Murder*.

Censors, the antient *Romans* had their publick Censors. IV. 253.

Censoriousness, the Bane of all Friendship and civil Conversation, VIII. 293.

Censurers private, have no due Sense of human Infirmities, no just Dread of God's righteous Judgment, I. 37.

Censuring our Brethren. The Iniquity of it, IV. 245. See *Judging* our Brethren.

Celsus, II. 54.

Charity, why magnify'd, and Gifts depreciated, IV. 300—306. Charity preferable to Faith and Hope, 306.

Yet the Apostle cannot mean any thing to the Diminution of either, 308. Christian Charity defin'd, 316.

The Definition defended, 317—322. The Properties of Charity, 322—326. The Properties of Faith,

Hope and Charity compar'd; from whence it appears upon what Ground the Preheminence is given to Charity, 327—333. See *Love*. The Grace of Charity so

diffusive, that it branches itself into all the Parts of human Life, VII. 386. He that is partial in his Charity

can hardly be real in it, 391. Christian Charity must be without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy, 392—

394.

Children

Children may bear the Iniquities of their Fathers, VIII. 85, 86. The Equity of God's Providence in such Proceedings accounted for, 86—100. This Doctrine reconciled with some Passages in Scripture that may seem to thwart it, 100—102. What is incumbent in Point of Duty upon that People, or those Persons, who have Reason to apprehend themselves concerned in this Doctrine, 102—107. An Application adapted to the 30th of *January*, 107—126.

China, II. 74.

Christ, considered as a Sufferer, there are three personal Qualifications that deserve our Notice. His Innocence, I. 218—221. His Greatness and Dignity, 221—223. His Goodness, 223—226. The Sting of his Sufferings consists in Shame, 227—231. In Pain, 231—235. Upon the Comparison, the Proportion is slender between him and us, his Sufferings and ours, and consequently it is unreasonable, indecent, and undutiful in us to be impatient, or faint-hearted, when we are called to suffer for his Sake, or by his good Providence, 235—243. By him God hath given us an entire Victory over Sin and Death, because he disarm'd Sin of all that Strength which it borrowed from the Law in his own Person, and made a publick Triumph over the Grave and Hell by his miraculous Resurrection from the Dead, 262—266. Christ's Divinity expressly reveal'd to us in diverse Places of the New Testament, II. 167—170. Those Hereticks, who deny the Divinity of Christ, tho' they don't reject the whole Gospel, yet they maim it in a principal Part, 171, 179, 181. As he was a Worker of Miracles, so he was a most eminent Prophet, 272. Christ called the Son of God in several Respects, V. 355, 356. When therefore distinguish'd as the *only* begotten Son of God, he must be understood so to be in a manner far transcending all those Respects, that is, by eternal Generation, 356, 357. Coming to Christ explain'd, VI. 269—273. Christ not an Opposer, but the most religious Observer of the Law of *Moses*, VII. 158, 159. His Presence in the holy Sacrament explain'd, VIII. 326—343. Christ had a real Being or Subsistence antecedent to his Incarnation, 360, 361. As he had a Subsistence prior

prior to this, so he subsisted in a Nature far more excellent than that which he afterwards assum'd, 361—363. The Nature in which he originally subsisted truly divine, 363—365. And therefore coequal and coessential to the one supreme God, 365—369. See *Example*.

Christendom, often made the guilty Scene of War and Bloodshed, VIII. 304.

Christians. Nominal Christians, Vol. I. 236. The Satisfaction of the sincere Christian enhanc'd by the Doctrine of the Remission of Sins upon Repentance, VI. 285—287. By the Acceptance of his sincere and willing, tho' not perfect and unfinning Obedience, 287—289. By the Aid of divine Grace, 289, 290. And by the blessed Hope of Immortality, 290, 291. The Doctrine asserted, vindicated from some Exceptions, to which it may seem to be liable, 291—298. Refin'd Christians, their newfangled Notions, VII. 127—131. The Duty of a Christian by no Means impracticable, 365, 366. The Necessity for Christians to be constant and fervent in their Prayers to God, 366—368.

Christianity. The Proofs of it, or its Case as to Evidence, II. 89, 90. The Propagation of it not the Counsel, or Work of Men, 259. What meant by the Doctrines and Precepts of it, III. 347. They ought to be either expressly reveal'd in Scripture, or virtually contain'd, 355—372. Their Nature, 372—378. Their Evidence, 378—387. Their Importance, 388—393. Christianity remarkably distinguished from all religious Impostures, V. 208. See *Gospel*. See *Religion*.

Chronical, I. 349.

Chronology. Little Niceties in Chronology not easy to be adjust'd, no Objection against Christianity, II. 91, 92.

Chrysostom, II. 269. VIII. 40. 358.

Church. Christ's Promise of being always with his Church must in all Reason extend farther than to the Persons and Times of the Apostles themselves, in Answer to the Rights of the Christian Church, V. 12—30. What Reformation is now necessary in it, or lies upon us, 261. What is meant by the Internals and Externals of it, 276. A short Character of the Church of *England*, VI. 23. Envy'd of proud *Rome* itself, VIII. Her Condition pathetically bemoan'd, 308, 310. See *Liturgy*.

Cicero, II. 125. His Determination upon the *Alexandrian* Corn-Merchant, 364. See *Tully*.

Circumcision. The Son of God made Man, by the Rite of Circumcision perform'd upon him, profess'd his Submission, and made himself a Debtor to the whole Law, V. 362. It being a painful Operation in the Flesh, was a proper Symbol to put the Jews in mind of that Mortification and Excision of their Fleshly Lusts, which even the moral Law, as interpreted by Christ, did most certainly require, VII. 117.

Civil War, the ill Effects of it, V. 271.

Clarendon Lord. His Directions how to weather the Storms of Rumour, Detraction and Envy, VIII. 37.

Clergy. The Treatment that the Clergy too often meet with, looks as if Men were verily persuaded that the Teachers Faults are the Peoples Justification, I. 56—60. The respective Duty of the Clergy and civil Magistrate, 60—62. The Clergy as Successors to the Apostles, entitled to Christ's Promise of being always present with his Church, separate from and exclusive of all others, V. 31—37. Objections, by the Author of *The Rights of the Christian Church*, against the distinct Order and Office of the Clergy, answered, 37—145. Their Persons reviled, their Ministrations ridiculed, 180.

Commandment. The sixth Commandment, with our Saviour's Improvements upon it, explain'd, VII. 160—170. The Doctrine therein contained stated, 170—179. The Doctrine (so stated) does contribute to the Fulfilling of the Law, because it maintains the Obligation of the Law in its full Force and Latitude, 180, 181. And because it best answers the Scope and Intention, as well as the Holiness and Perfection of the Lawgiver, 182, 183. Suitable Reflections, 183—188.

Communicants. See *Forgiveness*.

Communion, the Nature of Sacramental Communion, VIII. 325, 326. proved from the palpable Inconvenience, and great Absurdity of the corporeal Sense in which both the Lutherans and Papists understand it, 326—336. And from the manifest Reasonableness and Congruity of the spiritual and mystical Interpretation, 337—343. The Fellowship with Christians held with Christ, and one another in the Sacrament, is the proper Testimony that

that they are faithful Disciples, and zealous Worshippers of the crucify'd Jesus, and Members of his mystical Body the Church, 343—350. Inferences, 350—356. See *Kiss*.

Condemnation. The Justice of it when Men love Darknes rather than Light, II. 133—145. The Certainty of it, 144—152.

Condescension of our Saviour in taking human Nature upon him, V. 361—364.

Conscience. We should be infinitely tender of violating our Consciences, lest the Deceitfulness of Sin should betray us into some great Vice, and yet possess us at the same Time with a good Opinion of the State of our own Souls, I. 76—79.

Constantine, V. 276, 277.

Constantinople, VI. 232.

Co-substantiation. The Absurdity of it, VIII. 335, 336. See *Communio*.

Contentment. Not so necessary an Appendant to an easy Fortune as may be thought, VII. 353.

Contrition, true Contrition consists in a deep and unfeigned Sense of our Sins, I. 97—99. Accompanied with just and terrible Apprehensions of Fear, 99—101. With a bitter Remorse and most piercing Sorrow, 101—103. With an utter Hatred and Abhorrence of Sin, 103—105. With a thorough Change of the Will, and a full Purpose of Amendment of Life, 105—107. A Recapitulation, 107—109.

Conversation. See *Censoriousness*.

Corporeal Presence in the Sacrament, the Inconvenience and Absurdity of it, VIII. 326—336.

Corruption. It is not improbable that moral Corruption may be propagated as well as natural Infirmity, I. 253.

Courts of Judicature among the Jews of three sorts, VII. 164.

Covetous Man, I. 22, 23. 77, 78. His Picture, VI. 295. His insupportable Slavery, VII. 302, 303.

Covetousness, the miserable Effect of a confirm'd Habit in it, 81—83.

Cowardice defined, VI. 442.

Creed Nicene, III. 366. See *Nicene*.

Cromwell

Cromwell Oliver. A great Master of his Craft ; a good Manager of his Intelligence, &c. V. 242.

Crucifixion. The Punishment of a *Roman Slave*, VIII. 376.

Cyrus, it was a thing highly improbable, that *Cyrus*, a heathen King, shou'd be the Restorer of *Israel* from under Captivity : Yet God call'd him, and guided him as it were to this Work, V. 241. 300, 301.

D.

Damn'd. The State of the Damn'd not a State of mere Non-Existence, I. 362—366.

Daphne. A famous Oracle there silenc'd, as *Apollo* himself, when urg'd to it, confessed, by a dead Martyr's Bones, II. 269.

Darkness, a fit Resemblance of Sin, IV. 2.

David, his Case with Regard to *Uriah* and *Bathsheba*, I. 2—5. The Aggravation of it, 14—17. A severe Judge in the Case of the cruel Spoiler, 22. His Conduct to *Nathan*, 53. Compar'd with *Abab's* Conduct, *ibid*. An excellent Pattern for all those to imitate, who fall under any Censure and Correction for any Misbehaviour, 54. An extraordinary Instance of human Frailty, 74. His Character and Scrupulosity, 75, 76. His swift Progress in Wickedness, 79, 80. His Humiliation, 87—89. His Sacrifice a broken and contrite Heart, 95—109. Inferences, 109—114. Not Ground enough from the Light of Nature to build his Assurance of God's gracious Acceptance upon, 123—127. Nor from the Law of *Moses*, 127—129. But owing to some clearer Revelation, 129—139. *David's* Conduct in Affliction, IV. 369—372. The Process of his Temptation in the Matter of *Uriah* briefly represented, VII. 277. His Sin in numbering the People explain'd, 280. His awful Regard to the Hand of Providence quell'd his resenting Thoughts, when he was treated with so much Indignity by *Shimei*, VIII. 16.

David Kimchi, his forc'd Construction upon the Psalmist, VII. 145.

Deacons, their Office, V. 106—108.

Debauchee. It is almost next to a Prodigy to hear that such a one is thoroughly reform'd, VII. 309.

Deism

Deism, II. 125, 417. VI. 69.

Deists. The Character of the modern Deists, II. 171.

Their Case, 178, 179. If we could suppose a Deist to be truly virtuous, it must be upon a Christian Principle, and he is manifestly beholden to Revelation for it, loth as he is to own it, 207. VI. 191. They would pass for moral Men, V. 321. See *Unbeliever*.

Demagogues, VIII. 110. *Demetrius*, VII. 225.

Desolation. The Forerunners of Desolation in the *Asian* and *African* Churches, VIII. 308, 309.

Despair. The Nature of it, IV. 372. The Grievs that attend it heighten'd by some worldly Sorrow, more piercing and painful than the mere Sense of any outward Affliction, 372, 373. Persons most sincerely penitent, and most exemplary pious, subject to melancholy Depressions, and even seeming Desertions, 375—379. The false Conclusions with which People in Despair distract themselves laid open; first, in the Reflections they are apt to make upon the ill State of their own Minds, or what is transacted upon the Scene of their Imaginations, 380, 381. Little Reason to think, that the evil Thoughts, &c. complain'd of, are directly from the Devil, 381—383. But if they are, the Fault wholly his own, 383, 384. A Person in Despair, tempted to destroy himself, and actually putting it in Execution, not to be condemn'd for a Self-Murderer, 384. No Reason in the World for Persons in Despair to conclude themselves to be under the Power of the Devil, 384—386. No Reason to conclude that such Persons are alienated in Heart from God, because they are indisposed to read, pray, believe, &c. 386, 387. The Depression of Spirit, which they take for Despair, is in Truth a bodily Distemper, 388—390. The Ingredients in Despair, 388. Secondly, the false Conclusions, &c. laid open in the Reflections upon God's Decrees, or Determinations concerning them, and their final Doom, 390. No Foundation in Scripture or Reason for the Doctrine of eternal Reprobation, with which some despairing melancholy People affright themselves, 391—393. Others are strongly possessed that they are guilty of no less than the very Sin against the Holy Ghost, 393—398.

VOL. VIII.

Dd

The

The Mistake of those examin'd, who will needs imagine, that they have out-liv'd the Day of Grace, 398—401. The Torments of an evil Conscience justly punishing itself, no certain Marks of Dereliction; no Bar to Mercy, 404. Wherein Despair consists, VI. 357—360.

Despotic Rule. V. 262.

Devil. He is too much a Politician to work Miracles against his own Interest, II. 81, 269. His Insight into natural Causes; his Dexterity in applying them, 263. Raising the Dead out of the Verge of his Power, 265. Industrious to promote the Kingdom of Darkness, 415, 416. III. 423. Not answerable for all our Faults, VII. 287, 288. See *Despair*. *Enticement of Sinners*.

Diogenes. His Direction in the Case of Revenge, VIII. 24.

Dionysius, the *Areopagite*, an inquisitive Philosopher, II. 238.

Disimulation. An awkward Performer, when she pretends to imitate that heavenly Virtue, Christian Love, or Charity, VII. 61—66. A Prospect of the Vice of Disimulation, according to the several Shapes it puts on; the ceremonious, complaisant, good-natur'd Man, 66—68. The fawning Flatterer, 69—72. A third sort of Dissembler for whom is wanted a proper Name that is bad enough, 72—75. An Exhortation, 75, 76.

Divinity of our Saviour plain beyond Contradiction, III. 383. See *Christ*.

Divorce. Permitted rather to prevent the Thing itself, by qualifying it with certain restrictive Conditions, than to indulge and encourage it, II. 26.

Dodwell. His Defence of the Priesthood, V. 114.

Doing as we would be done by. See *Rule*.

Doleman, a Parasite of the Pope, VIII. 109.

Doxology. A short Answer to the Enquiry started by the Criticks, *How it comes to pass that the Doxology should be inserted by St. Matthew, and yet omitted by St. Luke*, III. 320. No unscriptural Addition, *ibid.* The main Scope of it, 322—331. The Particulars of it explain'd and applied, 331—340. See *Lightfoot*.

Drunkennes

Drunkennes, never to be left out of the List of the Works of the Flesh, V. 430.

Drusilla, her Character, VII. 7.

Duelling exposed, VI. 440—442. VII. 186—188. 241,

242. Ascrib'd to some satanical Infatuation, VIII. 12.

Duty. Nothing less than a Sense of Duty, and a fitting Respect to the Recompence of Reward can effectually oblige, or determine Men to be virtuous, where Virtue and temporal Interest are inconsistent with each other, II. 201, 202.

E.

Eclipse. The *Roman* Register of Books appealed to by *Tertullian* for the Confirmation of that preternatural Eclipse, which happened at our Saviour's Crucifixion, II. 55. As the Brightness of the Sun is still the same, tho' intercepted from our Sight by an Eclipse, so did the Lustre of the Divinity remain undiminish'd and unchang'd, tho' to us it might appear less, when veiled over with Mortality, and shrowded in Obscurity, VIII. 370.

Edification, oftener pretended to than truly attained, VI.

1. Great Stress laid upon it by *St. Paul* in his Epistles,

2. The great End and Aim of all the Gifts, Offices and divine Appointments settled in the Church, 2—4.

The Scripture Notion of it explain'd, 5, 6. Wherein it consists with relation to private Christians, 7—13.

And with relation to the Church in general, 13—15.

The Duty and Qualification of those, whose Business it is to minister to the edifying of others, 16—20.

The Duty of those, whose Desire it is to be edify'd, 20—23. The Vanity and Falshood of some Pretences concerning the Nature and Means of Edification laid open. First, the popular Pretence of some

Teachers in crying down all Morality, as a dry, empty, and unedifying Thing, 30. Void of Truth and Reason, whether we consider the Assertion itself, 30—33.

Or as it is a Charge laid against the Ministers of the Church of *England*, 33—36. Secondly, the pretended

Necessity of setting up separate Congregations, for the Sake of better and more spiritual Edification, 37. Not

warrantable in itself, 37—40. Nor allowable in those

that pretend to it, 40—44. The Pretences and Mistakes, with which the People are apt to please and deceive themselves, when in Truth, they can't endure sound Doctrine: First, their fundamental Mistake concerning the Nature of Edification, 45—48. Secondly, in thinking to better themselves by forsaking the Church, and following new Guides, 48—51. The mischievous Consequences of the afore-mentioned Pretences and Mistakes, and the Separation occasioned by them, 51—58. A short Rule, whereby every Hearer may make a pretty sure Judgment, when he hears an edifying Sermon, 59, 60.

Education. The Necessity of good Education in furnishing the Mind, I. 411—415. And forming the Manners, 415—418. The Usefulness and Advantage of it in the Improvements that it makes in Mens Intellectuals, 418—420. And Morals, 420—422. The Excellency and Advantage of that Method of educating Youth, that is in Use at our publick Schools and Universities, 423—431. A publick Education at School prefer'd to a private one at Home, 431. Objections answer'd, 432—439.

Elisha, under Pretence of being a Guide to the *Assyrians*, took them captive; for the Casuists allow a Liberty to amuse an Enemy with feigned Reports, and to make Use of any crafty Stratagem, tho' altogether inconsistent with the Truth, II. 347.

Emissens. The King of the *Emissens* first Husband to *Drusilla*, who deserted him, to take up with that uncircumcised Paramour *Felix*, VII. 7.

Enoch. His Translation an Argument, that if *Adam* too had walked with God, and not eaten of the forbidden Fruit by the Instigation of his Wife, he also with his Posterity upon the same Conditions would have been admitted to enter into Life, not through the Gate of Death, but by an immediate Translation, VI. 172, 173.

Enthoesm. the sad Effects of it, II. 441. In what it consists, V. 398, 399. It had once almost jostled out all sober Religion and good Morality, and brought the Ordinances of God into Neglect, if not Contempt, VIII. 118.

Enthusiasts, bold and extravagant, I. 186.

Enticement of Sinners. Sinners prompted to it by the Ignorance of the Devil, and their own deprav'd Inclinations, VI. 62—67. Their various Ways of Application to persuade others to bear them Company. First, By perverting Mens Principles, 68—74. Secondly, By corrupting their Morals, 74—80. But notwithstanding all the Cunning of the Seducers, there are Reasons and Motives always sufficient to determine any considerate Man against yielding to their Importunities, 81—89. General Advice, which may be of Use to us, in guarding against all the Designs and Attempts of such as would betray us into Sin, 89—93.

Entity, the whole Tribe of Gainsayers will allow Christ Jesus no other than a metaphysical Entity in the divine Foreknowledge and Decree, till the very Time that he was conceived in his Mother's Womb, VIII. 361.

Envy, defined, the Nature and Properties of it described, IV. 168—184. Some of the principal Causes from which Envy generally proceeds pointed out. First, Uncharitableness, 186, 187. Another Cause of Envy is Self-Love and Self-seeking, 187, 188. Pride another Cause of Envy, 188, 189. Another Cause of Envy is Worldly Mindedness, 189. Want of Submission and Thankfulness to God another Cause, 189—191. The mischievous Effects that Envy is apt to produce, 191—201. A Method proposed to remedy it, 201—209. Envy the genuine Offspring of Self-Love, V. 430.

Epicureans by the Dint of natural Reason tells us, that as we are but Actors of a certain Part, which the Director of the Drama has assign'd us, so it belongs to us to act that Part well and handsomely that falls to our Lot, VIII. 140.

Epicureans, an Atheistical Sect. Their Tenets, II. 109, 110.

Epicurus, his pertinent Observation, VI. 388.

Epinikion, St. Paul's Epinikion, I. 268.

Equivocations, all Equivocations, upon Examinations held before a lawful Magistrate, are utterly to be condemn'd,

demn'd, II. 366. Justly chargeable with all the vilest Qualities, and worst Effects of a Lie, 367.

Erasmus, censured for his Notions of the Divinity of the Son and Holy Ghost, III. 367—369.

Estius, a subtle Schoolman, VII. 254.

Eternal or everlasting does not necessarily include an infinite Duration; but this does not prove, that each must not so signify, when attributed to Hell Torments, I. 367, 386, 387.

Eternity, enhances both Misery and Happiness, and makes each as compleat as possible, I. 359.

Eternity of Hell Torments. See *Punishment everlasting*.

Europe, VIII. 233.

Evangelists, sufficiently furnished with the Ability and Opportunity of knowing the Truth of what they related, II. 36—41. Their Integrity in relating the Truth as they find it. 42—47. The Nature and Circumstances of the Facts related by them are such, as render all Imposture impracticable, 47—53.

Eve, more than an equal Sharer in the Transgression of eating the forbidden Fruit, VI. 107.

Everlasting. See *Eternal*.

Evil, what is meant by it, in the Petition, *Deliver us from Evil*, III. 308—312.

Example. The End and Use of it in general considered in the following Positions: First, That no Example of any mere Man can be suppos'd to have the Authority of a Law strictly to bind, nor the Safety of a Rule safely to direct, I. 150—153. Secondly, That the Example of good and holy Men, even those that are recorded in Scripture itself, are not always proposed to our Imitation, 153—156. Thirdly, That all those Examples which stand recorded in Scripture, even with plain Marks of Approbation, are not rashly to be drawn into Precedent, 156—160. Fourthly, That the Examples of such as have excelled in Virtue, are of very profitable Use, and of very good Effect, both by way of Encouragement, and (under due Restrictions) by way of Direction also to others, 160—164. In Matters of Religion, relating to Doctrine, Discipline, Worship, or practical Christianity, the ancientest Examples are chiefly to be regarded, and ought upon some

some Occasions to be carefully consulted; nay where there may be Reason to doubt of the Meaning of a Law, or where the Thing is not so explicitly and precisely deliver'd, but that unreasonable Men may dispute and cavil about it; there the Practice and Pattern of the first and best Christians come in opportunely, as the clearest Comment upon Scripture, and the surest Determination of any Doubt that can arise concerning the Meaning of it, in any Question of great Importance; Instances, in Episcopacy, 165, 166. In the Change of the Sabbath into the Sunday or Lord's Day, 166, 167. In the setting apart, and consecrating of Places of divine Worship, the Use of Liturgies, the Maintenance of the Clergy by Tythes, 167, 168. In Matters of Decency and Expediency, 168. In a scrupulous Conscience, 168, 169. In the Practice of pure and undefiled Religion, 169—173. The peculiar Eminency of the Example of Jesus Christ, to which all other Examples are to be reduc'd, as their fix'd and only Standard, 178—183. How far the Example of Christ is imitable, or fit to be imitated by us, 183—190. In what particular Instances we ought more especially to imitate him, 190. In his Charity, 190—192. In his Humility, 193—195. In his Meekness, 195—201. In his Patience, 201—207.

Excommunication. See *Canons Apostolical*.

Exinanition, Christ's voluntary Exinanition describ'd, VIII. 358.

Extemporary Effusions liable to Inconveniences, III. 89—94. See *Litany*.

Eye. The Meaning of the Precept of plucking out a Right Eye, I. 312—317. Illustrated by proper Instances, 317—321. The Reasonableness and Expediency of the Precept, as being equally worthy of the Wisdom and Goodness of God to enjoin, 322—326. And beneficial to Men to observe, 326—330.

F.

FACE, a Slap on the Face according to the Law of the twelve Tables finable in twenty five Roman Farthings, VII. 223.

Faith, necessary to the Support of Virtue, II. 206. Not proper that Matters of Faith shou'd be propounded in the demonstrative Way, III. 386. A Definition of Faith, IV. 309. The Nature and Properties of it consider'd, 309—314. Its Properties compar'd with those of Hope and Charity, 327—331. See *Charity*. Faith defin'd, 337. A necessary Connection between Faith and Virtue, or the Belief of Gospel-Truths, and the Practice of Gospel-Duties, 338—344. Faith has a direct Tendency to support and promote Virtue, 344—351. The most sublime and mysterious Articles of the Christian Faith are eminently serviceable to the Purposes of Virtue, 351—356. Virtue has the same Tendency to encrease Faith, 356—367. The Evidence of Faith and Sense comparatively consider'd, VI. 237—246. What that Faith, to which St. *Joh*n ascribes the Victory over the World, is, and what is implied in it, 302—305. What is there to be understood by the World, that we may the better judge, wherein the Victory over it must consist, 305—308. Faith is qualified to be so successful an Instrument in overcoming the World, because it prevents the true Believer with Motives much more forcible to induce him to cleave to that which is good, and to abhor that which is Evil, than any worldly Consideration can be to move him to the contrary, 308—313. And because it gives him an undoubted Assurance of such Aids and Succours, as will be sufficient to overpower all Difficulties, 313—316. What glorious Victories Faith hath gain'd, and what admirable Effects of this sort it has wrought in old Times; which may serve at once to reprove the scandalous Practice of this degenerate Age, and revive it may be the languishing Zeal, 317—323.

Falkner, Dr. III. 86.

Felix, his Character, VII. 6, 7. An High-Priest murdered by his Order, 13—17. See St. *Paul*.

Flatery, a sort of Lying very near akin to Slander, whose Words, tho' they may seem smother of the two, yet they are nevertheless deceitful, 'tis well known; and in the End, they both prove as bitter, and as

Stab-

Stabbing, II. 305, 306. Compar'd with Slander, 306, 307. The Practice of it pernicious, 308—310. See *Diffimulation*.

Flesh. What we are to understand by the *Flesh* and the Works of the *Flesh*, V. 423, 425. In what Sense the Works of the *Flesh* are said to be manifest, 425—432. All the Works of the *Flesh* recited, *Gal.* V. 19, 20, 21. Are equally concluded under the same Sentence, 432, 433. A comparative View of them, 434—437. Tho' all concluded under the same Sentence, yet a wide Difference is made between them in common Account, 437—441. The partial Difference put in common Account between Sins that are equally damnable is attended with a very fatal Effect, 441—443. A serious Exhortation, 443—446.

Fool. *Thou Fool*, how distinguish'd from *Raca*. VII. 168. The Punishment of the Reproach of *Thou Fool*, explain'd, 168, 169. See *Raca*.

Fop. Selfconceit his grand Ingredient, II. 191, 192.

Forgive. The Obligation that lies upon us to forgive Injuries in point of Equity, VI. 426, 427. In Point of Gratitude, 427—429. The Extent of this Obligation, or how far we are bound by it, 429—435. The manifest Expediency, and singular Advantage of complying with this our Christian Duty, even in the utmost Extent, and the vast Inconvenience and Mischief of the contrary, 435—438. An Exhortation directed to such as it may concern, 439—446.

Forgiveness. By the Heathens thought the Mark of a puny Spirit, II. 24. The Nature of the Debts specify'd in the Petition, *Forgive us our Debts*, III. 261—267. Wherein the Forgiveness of Debts, or Sins, does consist, 267—270. By what Means this Forgiveness is obtained for us, 270—278. Upon what Condition we are admitted to pray for and expect Forgiveness, 278—284. The Dispositions with which this Petition ought always to be accompanied, 286—292. The Wickedness of putting up this Petition with a malicious and implacable Temper, IV. 162. Mutual Forgiveness and Charity, a Duty of strict Obligation, both as it is comprehended in the Law against Murder,
VII

VII. 195—197. As it is a necessary Qualification for the due Performance of religious Worship, 197—201. And as it is an essential Branch of all Religion, 201—203. Christians more peculiarly under the Obligation of this Duty, 203—205. Especially as it is a necessary Qualification in order to the worthy receiving the Lord's Supper, 206—208. The Omission of so great a Point of our Christian Duty is utterly inexcusable in the Sight of God, 208—212. Tho' Charity and Forgiveness is indispensably requir'd to made us worthy Communicants, yet a Man is not literally oblig'd to go immediately from the Lord's Table, and address himself to his offended Brother to reconcile the Difference between them, 213, 214. Tho' Forgiveness and Charity is a necessary Qualification in order to worthy Receiving, yet the want of Charity is no justifiable Reason for our total absenting from the Lord's Supper, 214—216. The happy Consequences of a forgiving Nature, VIII. 5. Arguments to win Men over to the Practice of Christian Forbearance and Forgiveness, 21—36. Reasons and Motives to spur us forward in the Pursuit of this noble Victory, 36—43.

Fornication. Esteemed by the Heathens a venial Sin, II. 23.

Frailty. The Consideration of the Frailty of our Nature should make us circumspect and watchful of all our Steps, I. 72—79. When we fall, we must strive to recover ourselves by a timely Repentance, 79—89. A pathetic Reflection upon human Frailty, 89, 90.

Function Apostolical, did imply an eminent and immediate Relation to God, VIII. 191. Exempt from all Servility, 192.

Future Events, their Uncertainty, VII. 319—324. It is contriv'd for very wise and good Reasons, that things future should remain in Uncertainty, 325—330. The Folly and Wickedness to presume upon any Certainty or Stability in human Affairs, 330—336. The Application, 336—340.

Future State. The Heathens faintly perswaded of a future State of Rewards and Punishments, II. 24, 25. Arguments for it drawn from the Light of Nature, VII. 167. Tho' it can't at present have the Evidence of

Sense

Sense, yet it wanteth not such Evidence as is both proper and sufficient in its kind, 233—237. The Evidence for it built upon as good a Foundation of Certainty as that of Sense itself, 237—241. See *Wisdom of looking at Things not seen.*

G.

GAIN. The Nature of that Gain and Loss, which stand opposed to each other in the Gain of the whole World, and the Loss of a Man's own Soul, explain'd, I. 336—344. The vast Disproportion betwixt the Gain of the whole World, and the Loss of one's own Soul, 345—355. See *Soul.*

Gangrene, I. 328.

Ghost Holy, God, III. 367, 368. Wherein the Nature and Malignity of the Sin against the Holy Ghost does consist, IV. 395, 396. Who they are now-a-days that are really guilty of this Sin, 397. See *Despair. Spirit.*

Gnosticks. The Spawn of *Simon* the Arch-Heretic, tho' they vainly pretended to a deeper Insight in the Knowledge of divine Mysteries than others, yet by their Sensuality and Impurity, their uncharitable and censorious Temper, their supercilious and contentious Behaviour, they betrayed themselves to be either grossly ignorant of the plainest Duties of Christianity, or rather to be vile Dissemblers, and hypocritical Professors of the Christian Religion, VII. 370. They betray'd themselves by their bad Qualities; and this will always be a Rule whereby to judge of great Pretenders, viz. to confront their Profession and their Practice, 396. A black Catalogue drawn up against them by St. *Paul*, VIII. 306.

God. His ordinary Method of chastising Sinners is by his Ministers and Magistrates, I. 42. His wonderful Goodness to us his sinful Creatures, 111. Instances of his Goodness and Wisdom, 356—360. The Heathens ignorant of his Nature and Worship, II. 8—10. His Prerogative extendeth as well to the Reason as to the Will of Man, 214. He is our Father by Right of Creation, III. 143, 144. By Right of Preservation, 144, 145. By Right of Redemption, 145, 146. The Relation of Father in some Sense universal, 146, 147. Repre-

Represented as our heavenly Father, 147—149. What Tendency such a Representation has to inspire us with Confidence towards God, and such other pious Affections and Dispositions, as are likely to be well pleasing in his Sight, 149—156. Questioning his Excellencies and Perfections is Profaneness and Blasphemy, 196—198.

Gospel. Wherein the Pre-eminence of it consists, I. 135. The Terms of the Gospel, and the Publication of them to the World, Matter of mighty Consolation, 139—141. The Gospel very justly compar'd to Light, being that which helps even the Eye to see, and makes every Thing else visible, II. 4, 5. As it plainly discovers and makes known to us all the great and important Truths of Religion, 7. *viz.* The Nature of God and his Worship, 8—15. His wonderful Counsels concerning the Redemption of Mankind, 15—22. The Sum and Substance of our Duty, and enforces it with the best Motives to Practice, 22—31. The Gospel-Revelation is proposed to our Belief with the greatest and brightest Degree of Evidence, answerable to another Property of Light, which as it makes all Things visible, so it is itself the most conspicuous of all Things, 34. This Evidence opens itself with all the Advantage of Strength and Clearness, if we weigh and examine, the moral Certainty of the History itself consider'd as such, 35, 36. The Credit of all History consider'd as such rests principally upon the Qualifications of the Historian; and the necessary Qualifications of a just Historian, and one, whose Testimony may safely be relied on, are, First, the Ability and Opportunity of coming to the Knowledge of the Truth. Secondly, an unbiass'd Integrity in reporting the Truth simply and nakedly, as they find it, 36. The Evangelists were sufficiently furnished with Abilities and Opportunities of knowing the Truth of all that they related, 37—42. Their Integrity in relating what they are suppos'd to know to be true, simply and nakedly as they found it, 42—47. The Nature and Circumstances of the Facts related by the Evangelists, are such as render all Imposture, Fiction, or Delusion plainly

plainly impracticable, and the very Supposition of any such Practice perfectly absurd, 47—53. The additional Evidence, which the Gospel-History receives from the concurrent Testimony of other Histories, and the Acknowledgment of its profess'd Adversaries, 54—56. Another corroborating Evidence to the Truth of the Gospel-Revelation is the remarkable Correspondence that it bears to the Old Testament, in the Completion of some very remarkable Predictions, 56—75. The highest Degree of Evidence, that we have for the Gospel Revelation, is the extraordinary and infallible Attestation given to the Truth of it by God himself, 75—85. The Evidence given summ'd up, 85—88. A just Inference, 88—96. The Completion of our Saviour's Prediction of the unkind Reception, and fierce Opposition which his Apostles were like to meet with in the Publication of the Gospel, a most astonishing Confirmation of the Truth of it, 102, 103. A Detail of those vitious Prepossessions, evil Habits, ill Opinions and Practices, which tempted Men at first (and have still the same Influence) to oppose the Gospel, 106—128. The Condemnation of such Men just, 133—138. Heavy, 138—145. Certain and inevitable, 145—150. A short Sum of what has been said upon the last Argument, 150—152. A serious Application by way of Expostulation and Caution to those, who live under the Gospel Meridian in a Christian Country, and yet are no hearty Profelytes to Christianity, at least sceptical Disputers against it, 152—156. The Gospel a perfect System of all Godliness and Virtue, 183—208. What it is that the Gospel principally requires of us, 209, 210. What the Growth of the Gospel was, and how much it prevailed upon its first planting by the Apostles, 229—234. How many and great the Difficulties were over which it did prevail, 234—246. That superior Power, by which it thus encreas'd, and flourish'd, and became so mightily, so wonderfully prevalent in the World, cou'd not be merely human, 251—261. Nor diabolical, 261, 262. The very Nature of the Works themselves, those at least that were the most remarkable

ble of them, will help to evince this, 263—264. The Manner of performing them was contrary to the Use and Practice of the Dealers in Magick, and such impious Arts, 266. This indisputably clear from the End, at which these miraculous Works aim'd, and the Effect which they obtained, 267—270. The Power therefore, by which the Gospel so mightily, so wonderfully prevail'd, must be truly and eminently divine. 270—271. Reflections, 275—280. Faith and Repentance the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the Gospel, III. 347. Benefits convey'd to us thro' the Gospel. IV. 336. What is requir'd of us in Return for these Benefits, 337. What those Errors and Vices might be, which St. *John*, *Luke* iii. 4, 5. endeavours to remove, as so many Obstructions to the first Admittance, and future Progress of the Gospel, V. 305—313. See *Light. Revelation*.

Government. The Necessity of Discipline and Government to prevent the over-flowings of audacious Wickedness, I. 41. God's providential Government in its first Original consider'd, V. 229—233. The Extension of it, 233. 234. In the manner of its Administration always executed with infinite Power, Wisdom, Justice and Goodness, 235—252. The Benefit and Blessing of being so govern'd, 252—256. The Duties which are owing to the Lord of the Universe in Consideration of the general good Influences, and the peculiar Mercy of his governing Providence, 256—263. No Government without Subordination, VIII. 134.

Grace. Men may fall from Grace, V. 415. Grace defined, VII. 344. Its Energy and Power, when it is afforded us, 354—358. The Grounds we have to hope, that God will grant his Grace to us, if we duly qualify'd for it, 358—361. The proper Method of applying to God for it, and the surest Way to obtain it, 362—365.

Grammar. The Janitor to all the Liberal Arts, I. 414.

Gregory, S. His lofty Strain upon the Omnipresence of God, VI. 376.

Gratius. His pertinent Remark upon our Saviour's Conduct, as Bounder and Ruler of the Church, III. 110. *imagi*

imagines that the Manner of doing the Will of God, proposed in the Lord's Prayer, by way of Imitation, and Infigation to us, is taken from the Motion of the heavenly Bodies, which is regular, steady, and uniform, 218. His Exposition upon the Promise, that the Meek shall inherit the Earth, VIII. 312.

Grounds Mr. has advanc'd nothing, but what has been heretofore urg'd, and often by his Predecessors in Infidelity and Apostacy, and as often solidly answer'd, and silenc'd by able Advocates, II. 278—280. See *Religion*.

H.

HABITS. The Power of Habits great, I. 417.

Haman, the haughty, in plotting the Destruction of *Mordecai*, and the whole People of the Jews, became most unexpectedly the Author and Procurer of his own Downfal, and their Establishment, VIII. 224.

Hammer, II. 243.

Hammond, Dr. The Psalmist well paraphras'd by the Doctor, IV. 463.

Han d. The Precept of cutting off a Right Hand explain'd, I. 313—321. See *Eye*.

Hannibal. The Fate of the Orator, who wou'd needs talk of military Affairs before *Hannibal*, remember'd, II. 361.

Hascard, answer'd, VI. 40.

Haza d. The Sentiments of his Heart, when *Elisha* was foretelling what Evil he would do to the Children of *Israel*, I. 26, 27.

Hearing the Word of God. Heed to be taken both what, and how we hear, III. 343—346. We must impartially weigh the Doctrines and Precepts of Christianity, such as may be prov'd from Scripture, 346—360. And beware of the contrary, 360—372. We must entertain what we hear with such Affections, and Preparations of Soul, as are suitable to such sacred Matters, 396—398. That we may hear in such a manner as may be most acceptable to God, the two principal Qualifications are Reverence and Faith, 399—408. That we may demean ourselves suitably to the Character of our spiritual Guides, we must hear with Humility

mility and Discretion, 409—419. Two Things most especially, and indeed indispensably requir'd of the heedful Hearer: First, an impartial Application of what is said, every Man to his own particular Care and Circumstances, 420—429. Secondly, a present, speedy, and stedfast Resolution of practising what he hears, 429—437. The Necessity of private and publick Prayer by way of Preparation, 438—442.

Heart. A broken and contrite Heart metaphorical Expressions, standing in direct Opposition to what the Scripture calls a hard and stony Heart, consider'd, I. 94, 95. Wherein Contrition of Heart, stript of all Metaphor, truly consists, 95—109. The Acceptableness of the Sacrifice of a broken and contrite Heart, 118—122. The Heart of Man frail, fickle, and deceitful, III. 432, 433. The Heart defin'd, VI. 396, 397. What the keeping of it with all Diligence may imply, 397—400. What the Reason assign'd for it imports—for out of it are the *Issues of Life*, 400—402. The Excellency and Wisdom of the Precept, of *keeping our Hearts with all Diligence*, 402—407. The Observation of it press'd with some proper Reasons and Motives, 407—411. Brief Rules and Directions, 411—416. The Heart is the Fountain of the moral and spiritual Life, as well as the natural, VII. 288, 289.

Heathens. Most miserably at a Loss about the Nature of God, and his Worship, II. 8—10. The Redemption of Mankind, 15—17. The Sum, Substance, and Extent of their Duty, and Motives to it, 23—25. They were brought up in *Polytheism*, 237, 238.

Hell. Not a State of Probation, but Retribution, I. 352. Tho' all the Torments in Hell be equal in Duration, yet in Intensity of Degree they are not, VII. 186. See *Torments*.

Heresies. Not only reckoned amongst the greatest Immoralities, but are made equally the Works of the Flesh, II. 221.

Hereticks. Always very irregular and immoral in their Practice, II. 221, 222. Their Schism owing to some Check given to their immodest Ambition, V. 438.

Herod. His Barbarity stigmatiz'd, II. 54. Eaten with Worms alive, because he receiv'd the blasphemous Applauses of the People, and gave not God the Glory, VIII. 224.

Hesiod. His Genealogy of the Gods ridiculous, II. 9.

Hierocles, a learned Heathen, his Notion of Prayer, VII. 362, 363.

Historian. The necessary Qualifications of a just Historian, and one whose Testimony may safely be relied on, are, First, The Ability and Opportunity of coming to the Knowledge of Truth. Secondly, An unbiaſſed Integrity in reporting the Truth, simply and nakedly as he finds it, II. 36. No other Historian besides the Evangelists, has run the like Hazards to gain Credit to the Truth, 46. See *Gospel*.

History. The Credit of it consider'd as such rests principally upon the Qualifications of the Historian, II. 36.

Hobbes. If we must give Credit to nothing but what our Eyes and Ears and Hands convince us of, the Sadducees were the best Divines, and *Hobbes* the best Philosopher, III. 397. In Words, indeed, he owns the Being of a God, but denies him those essential Perfections, which make him to be what he is; as also that there is any Foundation in Nature for the Difference and Distinction between moral Good and Evil, IV. 28.

Holy Ghost. See *Ghost*.

Holy Sacrament. Justly to be look'd upon as the surest Pledge and Earnest of divine Grace, and the Conduit through which it most freely and plentifully flows, VII. 368. See *Lord's Supper*. *Communion*.

Honour. The false Idea of it, VI. 441, 442.

Hope. The most vigorous Spring of Action, I. 306. Hope defin'd, IV. 314. The Nature and Properties of it, 315, 316. Compar'd with the Properties of Faith and Charity, 327—331. See *Charity*. Christian Hope defin'd, VI. 327. The Definition particularly examin'd, 327—342. The happy Fruit or Effect of this Grace, 342—351. The necessary Means of attaining this Christian Grace, and growing and improving in it, 351—356. Inferences useful for the Direction and Consolation of Christians, 357—367.

Horace. His Mistake in Regard to Contentment, VII. 353.

Hospitals, viz. *Christ's*, *St. Bartholomew's*, *St. Thomas's*, *Bethlehem*, *Bridewel*, or *Work-houses*, their respective Uses, VIII. 73, 74.

Huetius, has learnedly proved by a perfect Induction of Particulars, that all the most remarkable Prophecies, solely or eminently relating to the Messiah expected, have been punctually verif'd in the Jesus whom we believe, II. 279.

Humiliation of Christ. The first Step of his Abasement is what is called his Exinanition, VIII. 369—372. Having once descended from the Pitch of his celestial Glory, he thought fit to join his Patience as a Companion to his Humility and Innocence, 372—375. That Humility might make its very lowest Stoop, Christ became obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Cross, 375—377. A short View of the adorable Sufferer from the Height of his Glory, to the very Depth of his Humiliation, 378—380. This voluntary Exinanition of him, who was eternally possessed of equal Glory with the Father, should engage us, who are God's natural Vassals, to abase ourselves in the Sight of our great Creator, 380—383. The profound Humiliation of Christ must needs powerfully incite, must effectually prevail with us to be always humble and condescending to our Brethren, 383—388.

Humility. Christian Humility defin'd, VII. 401. The Seat of it is in the Mind, and not to be measured either by Mens outward Circumstances, or their outward Deportment, 402, 403. It is a mean Opinion of ourselves arising primarily from a reverential Regard towards God, whether we consider him as a Being in his own Nature of the most superlative Perfection, 404, 405. Or with Respect to us of the most diffusive and universal Beneficence, 405, 406. A true Estimate of the Nature, the State, and Condition of Mankind conduces to beget in us Humility and Lowliness of Mind, 406, 411. The principal Property of Christian Humility is a profound Veneration for Almighty God, and an entire Submission of our feeble Understandings and

and frail Wills to his infallible Word, and most righteous Commandments, 413. Another Property is never to arrogate that to ourselves which we have not, and perhaps are not capable of having, 413, 414. Another Property is, to own all that Good with which we are endued to be a Receipt from God, 414. Another Property is not to despise any Man, as thinking him an Inferior, 415. Another Property of Humility is, that each esteem other better than themselves, 415—417. The blessed Advantages that attend it: It is a Disposition of all others the best suited to Religion both in Theory and Practice, 418. It is the Foundation and Prop of all other Virtues, 418, 419. It is the best Means of our Growth in Grace, 419, 420. It is the best Preserver of Love and Peace, 420—422. And the readiest Way to Honour and Glory, 422, 423.

Hydrophobia. The Folly, the Frenzy of the World being compar'd to that which the Physicians call Hydrophobia, VIII. 53, 54.

Hypocrisy. A scandalous Crime that hindered the Pharisees from receiving the Messiah, V. 311, 312. 321—323. A notable Sin, which goes as far as any towards quenching the Spirit, 408—410. See *Pharisees.* The Nature and Sin of Hypocrisy enquir'd into, with a Definition of it, VII. 28—36. The heinous Aggravations, with which the Sin of Hypocrisy is attended: It perverts and corrupts the very Nature and Design of Religion, 37—39. It gives great Occasion of Scandal in the World, 39—41. And it is a direct, impudent, and daring Affront to the God of Heaven, 41—43. Some distinguishing Marks, by which it usually discovers itself: Self-Justification, and Self-Appause, a shrewd Sign of an hypocritical Heart, 43, 44. A great Forwardness to judge and condemn others, without the like Severity towards one's self. Another suspicious Sign of Hypocrisy, 45. The Prostitution of Religion to mean and mercenary Ends, another Evidence of Hypocrisy, 45, 46. Another Mark of it is, an Inequality and Inconsistency of Conduct, 46—48. Proper Uses of the Discourse, 48—53. Hypocrisy in Religion defin'd, 55, 56. Hypocrisy in Friendship defin'd, 56.

Hypocrite. In what his Religion is plac'd, V. 322. A hypocritical Christian worse than the painted Pharisee, VII. 27. The sanctify'd Hypocrite ought to be mark'd with the Brand of Infamy, 173.

Hypostatical Union. By reason of the hypostatical Union, God gave his only begotten Son the Spirit, not by Measure, but in all Fulness, equal to the Largeness of his own Capacity, and the Greatness of our Needs, I. 179.

I.

JACKSON Dr. His Distinction about Christ's Presence in the Holy Sacrament, VIII. 340.

Japan. It may rationally be concluded, that if the Scripture Prophecies, and that Completion of them, which we contend for, had been as obvious to the Notice of the People of *China* and *Japan*, as they have been all along to the Jews: that they wou'd have long since submitted to the powerful Evidence, and confessed the Faith of Christ, II. 74.

Idiots. The best Appellation that the Heathens could vouchsafe the Apostles of Christ in Comparison of themselves, II. 120.

Jehu. A famous Instance of pretended Zeal, II. 381.

Jerom. His Notion of our Saviour's driving the Buyers and Sellers and Money-changers out of the Temple, I. 184.

Jerusalem. The Traveller here upon Earth to *Jerusalem*, and the Christian Pilgrim to the heavenly *Jerusalem* compar'd as to the Point of Certainty, VI. 240, 241.

Jesuits, their Tricks, V. 211—215. 217, 218.

Jews. Notwithstanding they were not altogether Strangers to the Nature of God and his Worship, yet they took up with very lame, imperfect Notions about them, II. 10—13. They had an indistinct Prospect of the Messiah, 17—19. And lay under great Disadvantages with respect both to the Knowledge of their Duty, and the most powerful Incitements to the Practice of it, 25—28. The Light which is reflected from the ancient Predictions of the Gospel, is so dazling bright to the Jew, that he can't endure even to look upon it, 74, 75. The Jews a stubborn and rebellious Generation,

- 158—161. Distrustful and impatient, 164, 165. 177,
178. Zealous of the Law, 236, 237. See *Japan*.
Jezebel. As she was Partaker of *Ahab's* Sin, so she was
his Fellow-Sufferer in the Punishment, VI. 108.
Ignorance, and *Weakness*, not so much the Cause of Sin,
as the Corruption and Naughtiness of Man's Heart,
I. 43.
Immersion, and *Emergence* in Baptism an antient Rite.
What represented by it, I. 304, 305.
Immorality. The Word misapplied, V. 439. Tho' Ma-
lice, Envy, Slander, Detraction, Backbiting, Lying,
and the like, do not in common Account pass for gross
Immoralities: yet in the Eyes of the holy and omnif-
cient God, all such Sins are great and grievous Immo-
ralities, as manifestly proceeding from some vitious Prin-
ciple, some unbridled Lust or other, reigning in corrupt
Nature, 440.
Immortality. In its first Constitution the Body of Man
had no natural Principle of Immortality, I. 248. The
Heathen Philosophers very faintly persuaded of the Im-
mortality of the Soul, II. 24. What we are to un-
derstand by Life and Immortality, VI. 163. The clear
Discovery of it owing to the Gospel, *ibid*. When the
Life immortal commences, and wherein it consists, 163,
164. It denotes in general a future State of Rewards and
Punishments, or else a State of Happiness, 164. With-
out this Truth there would be hardly any sufficient In-
ducements to the Practice of Religion, *ibid*. Whether
there were any Notices from the Light of Nature
about Immortality, 167—171. Or from the Mosaical
Law, 171—177. Wherein these Notices were de-
fective, 177—184. How these supposed Defects were
supply'd by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, 184—195. See
Infidelity.
Imputation of Sin. See *Sin*.
Incendiary. See *Palliations*.
Incredulity defin'd, II. 162.
Indefeasibly. By *Adam's* single Obedience (had he per-
form'd the federal Condition) the whole Race of Man-
kind would have been for ever indefeasibly entitled to
Immortality, I. 250.

Infallibility. The Pope's high Prerogative, II. 112. Not the least Shadow of a Promise in Scripture to support Infallibility, III. 363, 364.

Infidelity. The grand Secret of Infidelity, II. 156. It consists in departing from the living God, 162. It implies a particular Averseness to assent to those Truths, which are proposed to our Belief upon divine Testimony, or some other Manifestation of the Godhead, equivalent thereunto, 162, 163. This Infidelity consider'd, either as rejecting sacred and revealed Truths upon their first Proposal, or renouncing them, after they have been deliberately embrac'd, 163. In these Circumstances it is no better than Apostacy, 164. This Point illustrated by the Example of the antient Jews, 164. And modern Deists, 165—173. The Rise of Infidelity an evil Heart, 181. Some particular Vices which draw Men into Infidelity, Sensuality, 184, 185. Ambition and vain Glory, 185—189. Self-Conceit, 189—192. It is in a Man's Power to believe or disbelieve what he will, 193—198. Infidelity fashionable, V. 184. It is a Sin that is most desperately bent to quench the Spirit, 387—393. All Infidelity must be resolv'd at last into downright Wilfulness and Obstinacy, VI. 146. The Infidelity of such as have been born of Christian Parents, baptiz'd into the Christian Faith, and educated and instructed in the Principles thereof, is capable of no Defence, or Alleviation, 152—155. See *Religion, Spirit, and Lusts of the Flesh, Sensuality.*

Infidels, have no Title to be accounted good moral Men, II. 199. Not those who are so in the grossest Sense, that is, of no Religion, 199—205. Not those who give no Credit to reveal'd Religion, 206—212. Nor those that embrace what is plain in the Christian Revelation, but disbelieve the Mysteries of it, 212—222. Infidels, apostatizing Christians guilty of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, IV. 396, 397. Infidels, incorrigible Fools, empty, thoughtless, desperate Wretches, VII. 172, 173. See *Spirit, Pythagoras.*

Iniquity. Impartial Reason is ever ready to condemn any flagrant Iniquity, I. 9—13. Yet the Prejudices of Interest and Lust may and do hinder Men from discerning

ing or at least distinguishing in Practice between Right and Wrong, even in the plainest Cases, 13—18. Nevertheless all notorious Iniquity is in Effect condemn'd by the universal Verdict of Mankind, 18—31. Notwithstanding which, since thro' the Frailty of human Nature, Iniquity still abounds in the World, it is highly reasonable and requisite, that Men in a private Capacity shou'd exercise mutual Charity and Tendernefs to each other, if it were but to hide each other's Nakednefs, 34—40. However, to prevent the Overflowings of Iniquity, there is an absolute Necessity of good Government and strict Discipline, 41—50.

Injuries. See *Retaliation of Injuries*.

Intemperance, its Slavery, VII. 304.

Interest and Lust hinder Men from distinguishing in Practice between Right and Wrong even in the plainest Cases, I. 13. Interest the great *Diana*, that all the World is too prone to Worship, an Obstacle that stood in the Way of the Gospel, at its first Entrance into the World, II. 240—242.

Joab. See *Uriah*.

Job. His awful Regard to the Hand of Providence composed his Spirit under those great Calamities that beset him, VIII. 15.

John Baptist, the Herald and Harbinger of our Saviour his Testimony, II. 76, 77.

Josephus brands *Drusilla*, *Felix's* Wife, as a very lascivious Woman, VII. 7. His Character of the Pharisees, those masterly Hypocrites, himself both a Jew and a Pharisee, 35.

Josiah, his singular and eminent Character, V. 167.

Irenæus. His Note upon the Manner of the Apostles and primitive Christians performing Miracles, II. 266.

Italy. A Country remarkably addicted to Revenge, in which Murders are frequently committed in the most insidious and barbarous Manner, without the least Signs of Horror, or Remorse, VIII. 11, 12.

Judicature. See *Courts*.

Judging. Not the least Temptation to rash Judging, I. 37. It betrays a Defect of a due Sense of human Infirmities, 37. And of the just Dread of God's righteous Judgment, 38. Judging and condemning our

Brethren a general Practice, IV. 245—248. The Judging which the Apostle reproves, not at all akin to the judicial Procedure in Courts of Justice; neither is that Judgment or Censure herein concern'd, which Parents, Masters, Pastors, and Governours exercise over their respective Charge, 249. Nor is fraternal Correction, or friendly Reproof hereby inhibited, *ibid.* We are not here universally forbidden in any Case to think Evil of others, 250, 251. The Judging here meant, is a private, peevish, malicious, rigid censuring of our Brethren, and their Actions; and whoever he be that exalts himself into a Judge upon these Principles, is not authoriz'd to do what he does, 251, 252. Not from Man, 252, 253. Not from God, 253—255. He is not qualify'd, 255. Notoriously wanting in due Care, 255—257. Unfurnish'd in Point of Skill, 257, 258. Defective in Integrity and Candour, 259. And Honour, 259, 260. Whoever indulges himself in this Practice of Judging, can't propose any Manner of good End, 260—263. Remedies propos'd for the Cure of this infectious Itch in human Nature, 264—268.

Judgments. It is a manifest Misconstruction of God's Judgments, to think that those are always the greatest Sinners, who are the greatest Sufferers in the World, IV. 216—226. God's Judgments a startling Summons to Repentance, 226—229. If Men will not hearken to the stiller Voice of God's awakening Judgments, the Option at last is only this, Repentance or Ruin, 229—231. And whether it be nigh at Hand, or far off, 'tis impossible for the impenitent Sinner to escape, 231—233. Passing a harsh Sentence upon such as suffer most under an amazing Judgment, an uncharitable, 234. Presumptuous, 235. Unthankful, 235, 236. And an unprofitable Employment, 236. Instead of thus misemploying our Thoughts, we shou'd learn to compleat our Repentance, 237—244.

Jugglers. The Miracles supposed to be wrought by *Simon Magus*, *Apollonius*, and such kind of Jugglers, are but lamely attested at best, or rather justly to be suspected of Falshood in the Relater, or Imposture in the Performer; and all of them, if true, are but very inconsiderable,

siderable, and of no Signification or Moment, when once they come to be compar'd with those much greater and more stupendous ones recorded in the Scripture, II. 261, 262.

Julian the Apostate, in hopes of undermining or rivaling the Reputation of the primitive Christians, recommended their Practice in some Respects to the Imitation of his Heathen Subjects, I. 171. He acknowledges that Jesus Christ cured Diseases, and wrought many wonderful Works, II. 54. He endeavours to baffle the Prediction about the Temple at *Jerusalem*, 57. Sent out of the World with visible Marks of Vengeance upon him, V. 246. Dies with a *vicisti Galilæe* in his Mouth; owning with Rage and Despair, that the Saviour, whom he had renounc'd, derided, defied, was now his Avenger and Destroyer, VIII. 224.

Jupiter. As the licentious Pens of this Age are very free to tax the Christian Clergy, as if they deriv'd some of their most venerable Mysteries, and most important Powers from the Heathen Priests; so (to do them Justice) they are far enough from copying after the Heathen Laity, in that profound Regard which generally they paid to the Priests of *Jupiter*, VIII. 193. See *Austin. Clergy*.

Justin Martyr. In spite of Prejudice, the Doctrine of Christ triumphantly prevailed over him, II. 238.

Juvenal. He won't allow so much as the Thought, that those Men escape with Impunity, who are left under the secret Terror and Scourge of a guilty Mind, a Tormenter deaf to all Entreaty, VIII. 222, 223.

K.

KILL. *Thou shalt not kill.* The narrow Interpretation of the Jewish Doctors upon this Commandment, VII. 180. The Intention of this Law was not only to restrain actual Violence, and the Effusion of Blood, but also to suppress all inordinate Motions of Anger, 190, 191. Our Saviour farther from hence infers a Necessity of voluntary Submission and Satisfaction, where Offence has been given, 191, 192.

Kindness. The Price of it raised by the Needfulness of the Benefit bestow'd, I. 268—271. By the Good-will of

of the Bestower, 272, 273. And by the intrinsic Value accruing to the Receiver, 274, 275.

King Charles I. VIII. 107—126.

King of France, Lewis XIV. flatter'd into an Opinion, that Victory was chain'd to his Chariot Wheels, VII. 71. VIII. 232, 233.

King William, a fine Encomium upon him, V. 177, 178. Our good *Josiah*, 187. As deserving of a Crown as any of his royal Predecessors, 262. Our mighty Deliverer, VIII. 305.

Kingdom. God's Kingdom what, III. 208—210. The Coming of this Kingdom explain'd, 211—216. The Dispositions which a due Consideration of the Petition, *Thy Kingdom come*, is apt to stir up in our Hearts, 223—226.

Kiss. The holy Kiss amongst the primitive Christians, an Emblem of mutual Love and Friendship; particularly in celebrating the Lord's Supper, it was customary for the Deacons to give publick Notice, that they kiss and embrace one another in Token of their Reconciliation each to other, VIII. 322.

Knowledge. Affectation of it a pestilent Enemy to Christianity, II. 120. And the main Source of Deism, Scepticism and Atheism, V. 320. A very dangerous Snare, VII. 275.

L.

Lactantius. To magnify the Power of God's Word, he makes the Challenged to all that had a Mind to try the Experiment, to see if the Effect would not answer, II. 239.

Language. It leads the way to Science, I. 414.

Law. In the moral Part of it, holy, and just, and good: but in the judicial Part of it some things are permitted (as Divorce in particular) not perfectly the best, II. 25. Nay even the moral Part of it, tho' intrinsically good, yet labour'd under an accidental Imperfection, 26, 27. Besides it wanted a sufficient Force to excite the Jews to Obedience, and to give Life to their Practice, 27, 28. The End of the Law is to deal equal Justice to all, 360, 361. Some of its Forms do not always consist of literal Truth, 361. The temporal

temporal Threats and Promises of the Mosaical Law well adapted to the Capacity and Condition of the *Israelites*, VI. 182. What is meant by the Law and the Prophets, VII. 108. The Law divided into three Branches, the Law moral, the Law ceremonial, and the Law judicial, with an Explanation of each, 109—124. From hence is drawn a very illustrious Testimony to the Truth of the Christian Religion, both against Jews and Infidels, 124, 125. Hence we may also learn what our Christian Duty is, 125, 126. Hence we may take our Measures of the Perfection of the Gospel Institution, and the Extent of that Obligation that it lays upon us, 126—131. Christ made no Addition to the Law, 212, 213. The Law may lawfully be used; for tho' some wild Enthusiasts have sometimes made it a Dispute, it can be no serious Question among Christians, 231—233. The Passage in St. *James*, viz. *Whosoever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all*, thought hard to be resolv'd by St. *Austin* and St. *Jerom*, 243, 244. The true Meaning of it settled and placed in its proper Light, 244—252. Some Errors in Point of Doctrine obviated, which this Passage might be thought to countenance, 252—256. Others detected which it effectually confutes, 256—258. Some practical Inferences, 258—264.

Lay-baptism. No plain Scripture Instance for it, V. 103—111. No plain Instances in Antiquity, 123.

Lay-preaching. The pretended Scripture Instances of it refuted, V. 86—103.

Learning. The Process of it, I. 412—415. It makes the Scholar, it polishes the Gentleman, and in some Measure accomplishes the very Rustick, 420.

Legendary Tales. Transubstantiation prop'd up by them, VIII. 351.

Libellatici. Who were willing to have it thought that they deny'd Christ, tho' they really did not, were censured as downright Apostates, by the zealous Fathers of the Church, II. 368.

Libellers. A desperate Band of Men, VII. 101.

Libelling, finely exposed, VIII. 277. An Iniquity to be punish'd by the Judges, 278.

Libi ous

Libidinous Person. His abject Servitude, VII. 304, 305.

Licentiousness of Manners. See *Lusts of the Flesh*.

Life. Its Uncertainty, VII. 323.

Light. The Light which is come into the World may be understood of the Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, II. 2, 3. And of his Doctrine, 3—31. The Condemnation of Men, who love Darkness rather than Light, just, heavy and inevitable, 132—150.

Light a proper Representation of Virtue, IV. 2. God the Father of Light hath in his wise Providence thought fit to send out his Light and Truth; that is, to dispense the Means of Knowledge and Salvation in different Measures and Degrees, to different People and Generations of Men, VI. 121—131. The same Degree of Light, that is, the same Means of Grace and Knowledge, will operate differently upon Men of different Tempers and Dispositions, 132—138. All People strictly accountable to God for that Measure of Light and Truth that he hath been pleased to afford them, 146—150. They are liable to the greatest Punishment in Proportion, who resist the strongest Evidence, and sin against the clearest Light, 150—155. A Reflection, in order to make a Judgment, what our own Condition is, and what our Behaviour ought to be, 155—162. See *Gospel*.

Lightfoot Dr. his Reason for St. Luke's Omission of the Doxology, III. 321. His Account of the Interpretation of the Jewish Doctors upon the sixth Commandment, VII. 180.

Linguist, II. 253.

Litany. In it there is Provision for almost all the incidental Cases, that are fit at least to be mentioned in the publick Congregation; and as it is very full and particular, so it is withal so pathetical and solemn, so warming and affecting, that sure the Meditations of any one Man, that shall make Trial, shall never equal it; and therefore all sudden and unpremeditated Effusions must needs fall far short of it, III. 99, 100. See *Extemporary Effusions*.

Liturgy of the Church of England, its Character, VI. 23. The standing Evidence of what we believe, and whom,

as well as how we worship, 56. One of the best Preservatives against Error and Corruption, 57.

Lord's Supper. A positive Rite, and therefore can be resolved into no other Reason besides the Wisdom and good Pleasure of the Imposer, VIII. 346. This sacred Ordinance most shamefully expos'd and vilified by the Papists and *Socinians*, 351, 352. If it is the Badge of our Christian Profession, what shall we say or think of those, who live in the open Neglect of this holy Mystery, and yet (which is strange) can call themselves Christians, 352—354. Next to the Contemners, are those Men who raise Scruples, Good God! conscientious Scruples about the Posture of receiving, 354—356. See *Kiss*, *Forgiveness*, *Canons*, *Communion*.

Loss. See *Gain*, *Profit*.

Loss of the Soul. See *Soul*.

Lot. It is disputed by the Learned, whether, in defending the Chastity of his heavenly Guests, by the Prostitution of his own Daughters, he did well or ill, I. 154.

Love. Christian Love or Charity defin'd, with some of its most eminent Acts and Properties, VII. 58—66. The Love which the primitive Christians had for one another, the Wonder of the Heathens, VIII. 316.

Lucius Veracius, an insolent Fellow, that took a singular Pleasure in insulting every Body he met, by giving him a Blow upon the Face, VII. 223, 224. See *Face*.

Luke. See *Mark*.

Lust explain'd, VII. 269, 270. The principal Cause of all Temptation, 273—278. See *Interest*.

Lusts of the Flesh. An Indulgence to the Lusts of the Flesh, and a Licentiousness of Manners have been of old, and always will be, a grand Impediment to the Belief of the Gospel, and a strong Temptation to Infidelity, II. 122—128.

Lutherans. Their absurd Notion of Sacramental Communion, VIII. 326—336.

Liar. His Character, VII. 77—79. See *Slanderer*.

Lyurgus. He thought the well principling and discipling of Youth to be the main Foundation of good Order and Government, I. 421. He encourages Theft, Community

munity of Wives, and exposing of new-born Infants, that were not lively and lusty, II. 23.

Lye. The Nature and Formality of it, II. 283—288. The Turpitude and Baseness of a Lye in general discoverable from its Author the Devil, 289. From its Hatred to God, 290. From the Company with which it is ranked, and the Punishment with which it is threatened, *ibid.* From the ill Opinion which it always had in the World, 291. From the many ill Consequences, which are chargeable upon it, 292, 293. From its Inconsistency with our mutual Relations and Obligations as Men, Citizens and Christians, 293—296. From the particular Malignity of most of the several sorts of Lyes, that commonly pass up and down, and make much Mischief in the World, 296—320. Whether all Lying be universally unlawful, 322—331. Whether every Deviation from Truth involves Men in the Imputation of a Lye, 331—442. See *Slander*.

M.

Macrobius. Herod's Barbarity stigmatized in *Macrobius*, II. 54.

Magistrates. Presum'd to be void of all Passion and Partiality, VII. 239.

Mahomet. Some of the most eminent and earliest Churches of Christ have not retain'd the Truth they once received in the Love thereof; but have long since deserted, and quitted the Possession to the Synagogues of Satan, or the Mosques of *Mahomet*, VI. 127, 128.

Mahometism, compounded out of all other Religions, introduced and supported by the Sword, II. 277. V. 208.

Maimonides. His Explanation of the Prophet *Jeremy*, about offering of Sacrifices, VII. 119. He frequently puts Hearing for Tradition, 161.

Make-baits. Their Character, II. 259, 260. Disown'd by the honourable Profession of the Long Robe justly, 360.

Men, an impotent, and yet an ungovernable Creature, I. 17, 18. His Mind, when cool, sedate and unengag'd, gives a decisive Opinion against all apparent Iniquity, 29.

Mariana, VIII. 109.

Mark and Luke, tho' not of the Number of the twelve, yet they were early Converts to the Christian Faith, II. 40.

Marriage-bed. The Property of it the most precious, the most sacred of all others, I. 15.

Martyrdom. Courted with Earnestness by the Primitive Christians, II. 243. Nay, even the Executioners themselves, in doing their Office, were sometimes made immediate Converts, and ready to become the next Sufferers, 243, 244.

Maffinello, VII. 321.

Μὴ τις καλᾷ τῷ Θεῷ, proclaim'd by a Deacon to the whole Congregation at the beginning of the Offertory, VII. 208.

Mechanism. Our whole Frame and Mechanism out of Order, VII. 274—276.

Mede Mr. His Account of the Communion Service, VII. 206.

Melancholy religious. See *Despair*.

Menace and Coaction, the last and strongest Arguments of a bad Cause, II. 277.

Menander, a cunning Practitioner, and Factor for the Devil, II. 266.

Mental Reservations, upon Examinations had before a lawful Magistrate utterly to be condemn'd, II. 366. See *Truth*.

Mercury, unhewn, wooden, I. 426.

Messiah. Jesus the direct Counterpart of all the antient Types and Figures, and Adumbrations of the Messiah, II. 21, 22. All the Predictions celebrated by the Jews themselves, as containing the exact Description of the Messiah to come, are most punctually fulfill'd, and may be plainly descry'd by every unprejudiced Eye in the Birth, and Life and Death, and Resurrection, and Ascension of our Jesus, 56—75. The gross and unworthy Notion the Jews had of their expected Messiah, V. 305—307.

Meum and Tuum. In Matters of *Meum* and *Tuum*, of Right and Wrong, the Wisdom that is from above will direct us to part with some lesser Convenience that

that may be spared, for the more valuable Purchase of Peace and Amity, VII. 384.

Midwife. Our own foolish Consent is the Midwife to the accursed Birth of Sin, VII. 276.

Ministers. God's ordinary and standing Method of admonishing and chastising Sinners is by the Agency of his Ministers and Magistrates, I. 43—50. The ill Example of Magistrates and Ministers have too fatal an Influence in corrupting the Manners of the People, 68. More than ordinary Regard due unto the Ministers of God, III. 180—182. The Contempt of them a grievous Prophanation, 202, 203. A regular Mission of proper Ministers necessary (by divine Appointment, and in the very Nature of the Thing) to the Preservation and Propagation of the true Faith, V. 27. Their Duty, 314, 315. Their Qualification, VI. 16. Ministers of the Church of *England* compar'd with fanatical Teachers and Preachers, 41—44. Tho' they use their best Discretion in reprov'g of Vice, yet they shall hardly avoid giving Offence, VII. 175. The Inconsistency of the Ministers of the Gospel in and about *London*, VIII. 113. The Commission of the present Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel is from Christ Jesus the Lord, 172—182. The Instructions of the Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel are likewise from the Lord: They are not to preach themselves, not their own Notions or Opinions, but him and his blessed Gospel, 182—190. The Nature of their Employment is to serve the Necessities of their Flock, and to help forward their eternal Salvation, 190—195. The respective Duty of the People that are their Hearers towards them, 195—201.

Miracles. The Power of Miracles with which he was invested appealed to by our Saviour, as the most incontestible Evidence of his Mission and Doctrine, II. 78, 79. They bespeak an absolute Empire over Nature, and are such as the Devil would not have wrought if he could, 79—82. The Miracles of *Simon Magus*, *Apollonius*, and others, such kind of Jugglers suspected of Falshood in the Relater, or Imposture in the Performer, 262. The Miracles of our Saviour and his Disciples not perform'd by diabolical Power; this evinced

evinced from the Nature of the Works themselves, 263—265. From the Manner of performing them, 266. From the End they aim'd at, and the Effects they had, 267, 270. Legendary Miracles injurious to God and his Truth, 312—314.

Miscreants. The Use of very extraordinary Means of Salvation can never be thought to be reserv'd (by way of Privilege) for such vile Miscreants, who had first constrain'd God (as it were) to betake himself to this last Resort of his Power by their obstinate Opposition to those ordinary Means and Motives, which might have been as effectual, if Men had been ingenuous and persuasible, II. 149.

Moderation and Zeal inseparable Friends, II. 441. Both defin'd, 442.

Modern Refiner. His Conceits confuted, II. 201—205.

Molesworth Lord. His Suggestion against the Government of Youth being in the Hands of Priests, I. 435, 436. answer'd: His Philosophers Slaves, 437. The World much obliged to him for one valuable Discovery, 438.

Montanus. His Whimfies and Revelations, II. 440.

Moral Good and Evil. The Difference between them, in the Judgment of right Reason, as discernible, as distinguishable, as White and Black is to a good Eye, I. 9, 10. It is the toughest Piece of Work in Nature to root out those distinctive Characters of Good and Evil, 19, 20. This Distinction to be kept lively and waking in our Minds, 30. The Attempt to confound them wicked, IV. 3. A necessary Difference between Good and Evil, 4—13. As the Difference between moral Good and Evil is natural and necessary; so the Distinction between them is fixed and established by the positive and declared Will of God, which makes it the more notorious, and the Obligation to observe all the religious and moral Duties deducible from it, so much the clearer and stronger, 13—21. Brief Observations, 21—24. By what Methods and wicked Arts Men of corrupt Principles and Practices do endeavour to confound this necessary Difference, or make void this plain Distinction between moral Good and Evil, 27—36. How heinous their Guilt must needs

be, and how fore and heavy their Punishment is like to be, who go about to introduce this Confusion in Things, so manifestly different and distinct as Good and Evil, 36—53.

Moralists. Why so little Humility is to be seen either in the Writings or Lives of the Heathen Moralists, VII. 412. See *Infidels*.

Morality. No tolerable System of Morality among the Heathens, II. 23, 124, 125. The main Precept of it, and Christianity level to every Capacity, 429. The popular Pretence of crying down all Morality, as a dry, empty, and unedifying Thing is utterly void of all Truth and Reason, VI. 30—36. Archbishop Tillotson's Notion of Scripture Morality, VIII. 188. See *Edification*.

Mordecai. See *Haman*.

Mormo, I. 291.

Moses. His Exceptions against demanding the Release of the *Israelites* from the *Egyptian* Oppressor, II. 224.

Moss Dr. His Farewel to *St. Laurence-Jewry*, VIII. 388—390.

Muggletonians. They run into some of the grossest Absurdities of *Mahometism*, besides other monstrous Errors, and Frenzies of their own; have scarce the Face of any religious Worship among them, but dream of a kind of sensual Paradise for themselves, and mispend all their Zeal in damning others, III. 123.

Murder. Self-Murder by the Heathens esteem'd lawful, and in the Case of *Cato Uticensis* unreasonably applauded by most of the *Roman* Writers, II. 24. See *Kill*, *Light-foot*.

Mysteries, no Objection to Christianity, II. 91. All Nature big with Mysteries and Difficulties, 94, 95. Mysteries no harder to be conceiv'd than Miracles, 166. The Insinuation, that Mysteries have no Tendency to make Men better, and therefore are presumed to be unnecessary, is false and slanderous, 216—222. See *Unbeliever*.

N.

NAME of God. What we are to understand by the Name of God, III. 162—165. What is meant by Hallowing his Name, 165—169. How, and in what Instances his Name is to be hallowed or sanctify'd, as it betokens either his most excellent Nature, or whatever bears a peculiar Relation to him, 169—185. The good Affections, which the Consideration of Hallowing God's Name produces, 189—194.

Nathan. His manner of Address to *David*, and the Effect of it, I. 5—7.

Nicene Creed. In compiling the *Nicene Creed*, it was necessary to vary from Scripture Expressions; and yet this was so far from being a Falsification, or an Injury done to Scripture, that it was the greatest Justice and Security; there being no other effectual Way to vindicate it from the impious Glosses, and unnatural Interpretations of the Hereticks, who violently wrested it to the Seduction of the Ignorant; the Subversion of the Christian Faith, and their own Destruction, III. 371, 372. See *Creed*.

Nineveh. Its Case with regard to the Prophet's Message, I. 373, 374.

Non-Entities. The Heathens worshipped mere Non-Entities, II. 10.

Note-Maker. An Author of a peculiar Strain, in his brief Notes upon St. *Athanasius's Creed*, tells us briefly and roundly, that a good Life is absolutely necessary to Salvation; but a right Belief in those Points (*viz.* those that are contained in that Creed) that have been always controverted in the Churches of God, is in no Degree necessary, much less necessary above all Things. And if these great Mysteries of Godliness be not without Controversy, by what Privilege can any other stand exempted, especially if they should light into the Hands of a Note-Maker, III. 353.

Namus, tho' otherwise an able Lawgiver, was deficient in the Education of Youth, I. 422.

O.

OATH. An Oath in this Age, a common prostituted Thing, IV. 57, 58. An Oath defin'd. The Nature of an Oath, 59—63. The Conditions of an Oath, viz. Truth, Judgment and Righteousness explain'd, 63—71. Whether it be lawful to swear at all, proved lawful from the Nature of an Oath, 72, 73. From the universal Consent of all Nations, 73. From the Examples recorded in holy Writ, 74. From a right Understanding our Saviour's Words, 74, 75. A reverent and religious Oath lawful and allowable, 84, 85. The prophane Abuse of an Oath, which consists either in swearing vainly and idly, or else falsely and perfidiously, exposed and exploded, 85—106.

Occasional Conformists. See *Schism*.

Oliver Cromwell. An Arch-Rebel, and an Arch-Hypocrite, VII. 33.

Omnipresence. The Omnipresence of God defin'd, VI. 371. Prov'd to be an Attribute essentially belonging to the Godhead from Reason, 371, 372. From Scripture, 372—374. The Manner of it represented so far forth as either Reason or Scripture give any Light to it, 374—381. The firm Belief of Omnipresence is among other Means, one of the best, to settle our Faith in all Points, and to reduce Reason to a convenient Subjection, and indeed to make the whole Scheme of the Christian Religion appear rational and credible to any sober and impartial Considerer, 382—384. Very instrumental to beget in our Minds an Affiance in his particular Providence, and a perpetual Regard to him for it, 384—385. If duly apply'd, the greatest Encouragement to Virtue, and the most effectual Restraint upon Sin, that is possible, 385—388. The best Remedy against all manner of Self-deceit and Hypocrisy, 388—390. It is of peculiar Use both to incite and to regulate our Devotions, 390—392. It will both teach, and oblige us to live reverently, and circumspectly, as in the Sight of God, and as being strictly accountable to him for every Thought, and Word, and Action throughout our whole Lives, 392—394.

ὁμοδοσιον τῷ πλεῖ. Notwithstanding what *Erasmus* says to the contrary, undeniably proved by the learned *Dr. Bull*, who was conversant in this Argument with a great deal of Diligence and Exactness, that it was the constant Belief of the primitive Fathers, from the *Nicene Council* upwards, to the Times of the Apostles themselves, III. 369. By the one comprehensive Word ὁμοδοσιον the Hereticks confounded, 379. Used by the ancient Bishops at *Rome* and *Alexandria*, 371. Nor could the Hereticks with any Colour reject it as unscriptural, when the very *Shibboleth* of their blasphemous Faction, the τὸ ἐκ ἑκ ὀνίων, καὶ τὸ ἐν πολεῖ ὄτε ἑκ ἧν. was wholly of their own Invention, 371.

Ordeal, VIII. 32.

Origen. Condemned for unnatural Cruelty to himself, I. 314. He takes notice, that the Converts to Christianity were restor'd from the very Sink of all Corruption and Impurity to the Practice of Sobriety, Continence, grave and regular Behaviour, II. 239.

P.

Palliations. Commonly made use of to cover the Sins of the Incendiary, the Heretick, and the Schismatick, V. 438.

Papists. Their pious Frauds, their lying Wonders, supposing they were lawful, not to be made use of in the Conversion of Heathens, II. 397. Their Presumption, 400. Their Charity, 401. Their Doctrines concerning Purgatory, Invocation of Saints, Adoration of Images, Sacrifice of the Mass, are foul Corruptions, III. 365. Their horrid Practices, V. 213—222. Directions to the Protestant how to guard against them, 222—226. Their Emissaries great Pleaders for better Edification, VI. 58. Main Strefs laid upon Obedience to Holy Church, 216. Their Distinction between Sins venial, and Sins mortal antisciptural, VII. 254. Their absurd Notion of sacramental Communion, 326—336. Ridiculously fond of Transubstantiation, 351.

Parents, eager to send their Sons to the Universities, full sore against *Minerva's* Will, I. 426.

Pastors and Governors are under the highest Obligation to keep themselves, all that may be, free from any great Blame or Blemish, lest the Execution of their proper Office should turn to their greater Shame and Condemnation, I. 60—67. Their Account will be severe, because their Offences are exceedingly aggravated, 67—70.

Pathos, I. 194.

Patience, always necessary, I. 214—216.

Paul St. In his Temper zealous and sincere, I. 145—149. His Subject of Discourse before *Felix*, the Occasions of, and Observations upon it, VII. 3—14. The Effect which the Apostle's Discourse had upon *Felix*, with Observations, 14—18. The Manner of *St. Paul's* Dismissal after he had reasoned *Felix* into a Fit of Trembling, with Observations, 18—24.

Peace. What is meant by the Peace of God, VIII. 282—286. What is meant by the Peace of God ruling in our Hearts, 287—289. When it does so, it will enable Men to get the entire Mastery over their Passions, 290, 291. It will enure them to the Exercise of all social Virtues, especially those which are more peculiar to the Gospel, 292—295. In consequence of this, it will teach Men what belongs to their Duty, how to comport themselves suitably in all Capacities, and Relations of Life; and if possible to live peaceably with all Men, 295—299. What the weighty Reasons are, which oblige us to submit to the Government and Direction of the Peace of God, 299. The first Reason taken from our general Vocation as Christians, 300, 301. The second, from the peculiar Nature of the spiritual Society of which we are Members, 301, 302. That which enforces these Reasons still the more, is the Gratitude we owe to Almighty God for his unspeakable Mercy towards us, 302, 303. A short Reflection upon the Manners of Men, and the State of Things in the Christian World, by which we see what sort of Conformity they bear to that which has already appear'd to be our indispensable Duty, and which will in the Sequel appear to be our undoubted Interest, 304—311. What the Motives are, which may most effectually induce us to obey the Peace of God ruling

in our Hearts, and submit to its Guidance and Direction, 311—324.

Peaceable Man, his Conduct, VII. 377—381.

Pearson Bishop, argues admirably upon the Divinity of the Son, VIII. 365, 366.

Peccadillos, I. 135.

Peerless, VIII. 358.

Pentecost, II. 38, 69.

People. It is the Duty of People to submit modestly to the Reprehensions and Castigations of their Pastors and Governours, albeit they also are Men subject to like Passions and Infirmities with themselves, I. 52—60. The People a monstrous huge Potentate, V. 214. It is the Duty of the People to suffer patiently the Reprehensions of their Minister, 315, 316. More especially they ought to take warning of those Sins, which were the great Obstacles to the Reception of the Messiah, and to a hearty Compliance with his Gospel, 316—325.

Perjury. The Guilt of it incur'd not only by delivering that for Truth, which we know to be false, but also by asserting that at Random, which we don't know to be true, IV. 63—66. How Perjury may be prevented, 66—70.

Pharaoh. His Induration consider'd, VII. 281—285.

Pharisees. Notorious Transgressors of the Law, I. 310. Highly esteem'd for their exact Knowledge of it, and the strict Observation of it, II. 114, 115. Proud and vain glorious, 118, 119. Indulged the Lusts of the Flesh, 122—124. Hypocritical Zealots, 382. Juggled with the Man that was born blind. 427. Their Errors and Vices, which were Obstructions to the Admittance and Progress of the Gospel, III. 305. viz. The gross Notion they had of their expected Messiah, 305—307. A base and sordid Love of the World, 308, 309. Pride and vain Glory, 309—311. Hypocrisy, 311, 312. Malice and Hardness of Heart, another Impediment, 312, 313. Not agreed concerning the Resurrection of the Wicked, VI. 183. They imagin'd there would be a sensual Paradise provided for the Righteous, where they should marry and feast, which was the Ground of that Objection of the Woman that

had seven Husbands, 183. Their Character gives us a just and full Pourtraiture of Hypocrisy, VII. 31—34. Their Character by *Josephus*, 35, 36. They have great Regard for that very Custom of washing their Hands before Eating, 142. See *Righteousness*.

Phænomena, VII. 347.

Philosophers. Their Practice wide of their Principles, I. 178. Among the *Greeks* and *Romans* Slaves bought and sold for Money, 437. Allow'd what was impious, II. 23. Faintly persuaded of the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State, 24. They held several Tenets inconsistent with the main Principles of Christianity, 110. Miserably bewildered even in the greatest Point of a future State, 206, 207.

Phineas. His Zeal in transfixing *Zimri* and *Cozbi* not hastily to be imitated by every private Person, I. 156.

Pilate. See *Pontius*.

Pity. A Definition of it, IV. 276. Of all the Objects of Pity, the most sad and deplorable is the habitual Sinner, *ibid*.

Plato. He pleads for the Lawfulness and Conveniency of having Wives in common, II. 23. His Complement upon Truth, VII. 396. His Method of proving a Virtue that is truly genuine, VIII. 39.

Plerophory, I. 139. VI. 340, 350.

Pliny Junior. His good and just Thought, I. 34.

Pliny, the Naturalist, thought it a Thing out of the Power of God to restore the Dead to Life, 299. His Account of the Price of a Philosopher when made a Slave, 437. His Testimony about the prodigious Number of Christians, II. 232.

Plutarch. His Observation upon *Numa* in the Parallel, which he draws between him and *Lycurgus*, I. 422. He taxes it, as too frequent a Fault in Parents, that they thought the very vilest of their Slaves good enough to be Governours to their Children, 437. *Lycurgus's* flattering Biographer, II. 23. His Notions of a future State, VI. 180. His Method of Revenge, VIII. 24. His judicious Observation upon Providence, 208, 209. His affecting Description of an Evil Conscience, 222.

Pontius Pilate. That Jesus Christ suffered under *Pontius Pilate* is asserted by *Tacitus*, II. 54. He transmitted an Account of our Saviour's Miracles and Resurrection to *Tiberius*, 55. See *Apologists*.

Popery. How if Popery come again to reform the Re-form'd! IV. 240. What is to be done if we are in good Earnest afraid of Popery, 241. Popery a Scheme of Religion not fram'd according to the Simplicity of the Gospel, V. 209. Propagated by Arms and human Enticements, 211. Cautionary Laws against the Return of Popery, 222. Popery and arbitrary Power, 260. Popery and Slavery inseparable, 317. We are with good Reason fearful of Popery, VI. 158—161. VIII. 235.

Porphyry, unwillingly calls Christianity, *ἡ καλῶσα διδασκίη*, II. 235.

Positive Men. Their Conduct and Behaviour together, and apart, I. 25, 26.

Possible. All Things possible with God, except it be such as imply a Contradiction, or argue some Imperfection, VII. 345.

Poverty. It makes Men impatient and distrustful of God, VII. 275.

Power. A grand Obstacle to the Progress of the Gospel, II. 242—244.

Prayer. Not to be made use of as an Instrument of Vengeance upon our Enemies, I. 163. Whereupon the Efficacy of it is founded, III. 4—15. The Extent of its Efficacy, 15—18. The Conditions without which Prayer can't be effectual, 18—50. A Definition of Prayer, 56. The Necessity of Prayer in Respect of God, 56—63. In Respect of ourselves, 63—69. Our Disability to pray for any thing as we ought, as we are ignorant of the Will of God, 70—72. As we are ignorant of our own Condition, 72—76. As we are unable of ourselves to raise our Affections to a Pitch suitable to so holy an Exercise, 77—80. The Lawfulness and Expediency of Forms of Prayer, 82—100. The Reasonableness of complying with such Forms as are prescribed and received, 107—114. The Benefit and Advantage of Conformity herein, as it is a Spur to Zeal, and a Help to Devotion,

- Devotion, 114—116. As it adds to the Efficacy of our Prayers, 116—119. As it is an excellent Expedient to preserve the Unity of the Faith, 119—123. And as it tends to promote Christian Charity, 123—128. The Lord's Prayer a Pattern and a Form, 136. It was venerable in the Esteem of the Antients, 136, 137. A short View of it, 139, 140. Design'd for general Use, as being equally calculated both for private and publick Occasions, 321. Prayer necessary upon Account of the Frailty of sinful Flesh, 462—468. Prayer the best Preservative against the Defilement of the Heart, VI. 415, 416. The most immediate Recourse that we can have to God for his divine Assistance in the Discharge of our Duty, VII. 362—365. See *Hearing the Word of God*, *Litany*.
- Preaching*, intended not so much to inform the Ignorant (that is more properly the Catechist's Office) as to remind those of their Duty; who are apt to forget it, I. 44. The Design of Preaching is not to gratify itching Ears, nor entertain squeamish Fancies; not to fill Men's Heads with airy Notions and Speculations, III. 429.
- Predictions*. Some of our Saviour's Predictions carry in them a double Proportion of Evidence; that of Miracles, as well as Prophecies, II. 83, 84.
- Prejudice*. The Effect of Protestant Prejudice, II. 112. Prejudice an Obstacle, which stood in the way of the Gospel, at its first Publication, 236—238.
- Presumption*. What is imply'd in the Word, V. 152. How it is to be avoided, VI. 361—364. See *Reliance*.
- Pride*, and vain Glory have always been, and still are a very dangerous Temptation to make Men resist the Truth, and rebel against the bright shining Light of the Gospel itself, II. 118—122. The Operation of which was very powerful in the Days of old, 185—187. This proud, vain glorious Humour, tho' it may operate somewhat differently, hath the same fatal Influence in obstructing, undermining, and corrupting the Faith of Christ, even to this Day, 187—189.
- Priesthood*. The Christian Priesthood of divine Institution, V. 11. See *Dodwell*.

Priests. The Pagan Priests, who liv'd upon the Cheat of Oracles, thought themselves nearly concern'd to oppose Christianity, II. 116. Much respected by the Heathen Laity, VIII. 193.

Princes, not to be dethron'd upon the Account of Religion, V. 214. In what their Pre-eminence consists, 270. It is their Duty to conserve the publick Peace, 271—274. To protect, encourage and promote God's true Religion and Virtue, 274—279. That Princes may be so qualify'd, as may best answer the End of their high Trust, ought to be the Prayer of all their good People; and when they are so qualify'd, the Subject of their Thanksgivings, 279—295.

Pro Confesso, I. 220.

Prodigal. His free Censure upon the covetous Man, I. 23.

Profit and Loss, are Considerations that chiefly engage the Thoughts, direct the Views, and influence the Actions of all the busy and industrious Part of Mankind, I. 331—333. And Pity it is that they should not proceed by the same Rule in the most important Concern, the Safety and Welfare of their immortal Souls, 333—335.

Prophecies. The Prophecies, which we understand of the Messiah, have been acknowledg'd to belong to him by the most learned Rabbins, II. 73. Completion of Prophecies by Miracles, the most evident Mark of divine Wisdom and Power, 270.

Prophets. See *Law.*

Protestant Prejudice. See *Prejudice.*

Prototype. Every Image wants the Prototype to support its Subsistence, VII. 363.

Providence. The Procedure of divine Providence in delaying or suspending the Punishment of Sinners in this World, is agreeable to the truest Measures of Goodness, Wisdom and Justice, 208, 226. Consequently it is a very unjust Objection to a very kind Providence, to imagine that God's Patience and Forbearance is any Encouragement to Sin, and a most grievous Abuse for Sinners to make it so, 226—229. What Construction and Use Men in Reason and Conscience ought to make of such God's Dispensations, 229—240. See *Plutarch.*
Publick-

Publick-Weal, has a reserv'd Interest in all Mens Honours and Estates antecedent and superior to their private Right: of which they justly incur a Forfeiture, when they endeavour to subvert that Government, which affords them Protection, VIII. 88.

Punctilio. We are not oblig'd to follow all the imitable Actions of Christ, in every the minutest Circumstance and Punctilio, I. 189.

Punishments. Everlasting Punishments the strongest of all Sanctions, I. 41. Everlasting Punishment threatned, *Matth.* xxv. 46. Must of Necessity be understood of positive Sufferings in opposition to a State of Annihilation, in which some would fain take Sanctuary, 361—366. And of endless Sufferings without Cessation, which others are willing to hope for, 366—374. Revelation clear for eternal Punishment, 374. Inferences, 376—381. The Infliction of an everlasting Punishment upon Sinners is consistent with the divine Justice and Goodness, 389—398. Objections answer'd, 398—404. The Conclusion, 405—408.

Pupils. Their Irregularities in the Universities accounted for, I. 430, 431.

Purgatory. Notwithstanding *Bellarmino's* fruitful Invention, there is nothing to be gain'd towards Purgatory from *Matt.* v. 21, 22. VII. 185. Purgatory the fond Dream of the Papists, 209.

Pythagoras. Such Monsters there are, who tho' born in a Christian Country, and receiv'd into the Church by Baptism, can find in their Hearts to deny the Lord that bought them: Nay can delight to crucify him afresh, between two Thieves, *Pythagoras* and *Apollonius*, whom they have set up as the Rivals of his Honour, V. 391. See *Infidels*.

Q

QUAKERS. They will be call'd Protestants, tho' they can scarce be call'd Christians, II. 113. Notoriously guilty of Absurdities and Blasphemies, 439. They deny the Lord that bought them, and set up a Christ within in opposition to him, III. 122. They think it unlawful to swear, IV. 72. No Christians, VI. 55.

Qualifications,

Qualifications requisite to an upright, and unblameable Conversation. First, a simple and sincere Intention, VI. 449—456. Secondly, a conscientious Care and Consideration of all our Actions; and the first Part of our Care must be to inform ourselves rightly and fully of our Duty, 457—459. Our next Care ought to be the Application of the Rule to Practice, whereby we are to walk, 459—463. The third Qualification is a firm Adherence to, and a steady Pursuit of that, which is good and virtuous, 463—466.

Queen Anne. Her Zeal and Moderation, II. 444, 445. An Encomium upon her, V. 279. Praise and Glory to be render'd to God for her noble Qualifications, 280. What Prayers to be put up for her, 281, 282. Her Magnanimity, Munificence, Prudence, Clemency, &c. 289, 290. Praises to God, and Prayers for her, 290—295. VIII. 239, 240.

Quintilian. He prefers a publick Education at School to a private one at Home, I. 431.

R.

Rabbins. See *Prophecies*.

Raca. A Definition of it; the use of it in Conversation how punished, VII. 166, 167. The bare use of the Word *Raca*, or others of the like Importance, not of itself enough to make a Man pass for a Scornor or Reviler, 171—173. See *Fool*.

Reason impartial, ready to condemn any flagrant Wickedness, I. 9.

Reasoning. The Faculty of Reasoning itself, an Illumination from God, VI. 168.

Rebellion. See *King Charles I.*

Recumbent. Leaning, Resting, Rolling upon the Person of Christ, fanatical Phrases, VI. 35.

Redemption. Our Redemption an effectual Remedy for the Insufficiency of the Law, V. 366.

Reformation. The Steps of it, V. 216, 217.

Regicides. Barbarous Regicides, who thought they did God good Service in murdering their lawful Sovereign, V. 247.

Reliance. A confident Reliance upon God's Protection and Favour, purely in virtue of that external Relation,

tion, which a People may bear to him, as being Professors of his true Religion, is a most unreasonable Presumption, V. 150. This made out from the Reason of the Thing itself, 151—154. From the Nature of God, 154, 155. From the Tenor of his Promise, 155—159. And from the constant Method of his Providence, pursuant to the Tenor of such his Promises, 159—164. The Jews notoriously guilty of this confident Reliance, 164—171. Our Case compar'd with that of the Jews, 171—183. Admonitions suitable to our Condition, 183—187.

Religion. The Encouragement of Religion, and the Discouragement of Vice, is the Magistrate's most important Care, and at once his Duty and his Interest, I. 47. The Principles of Religion are to be instilled into the tender Minds of Children, 420, 421. The Christian Religion remarkably distinguish'd from all religious Impostures, II. 276. Tho' clogg'd with all possible Disadvantages, yet it prevail'd by its native Efficacy, 277. It has been oppos'd by Artillery of of all sorts, 278. Remarks upon the Author of the *Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion*, 278, 279. The present State of Religion, 417. In the first Ages of the World, the Care of it is committed to the Heads and Governours of Families, IV. 414—416. We have great Reason to value our Religion and Constitution, as on many other Accounts, so particularly for its Opposition to Popery; and that not only in Point of Doctrine or Worship, but even as to the Manner of its first Establishment among us, V. 216. The Belief and Practice of the Christian Religion is Matter of much Satisfaction and Comfort to those, who are sincere in it, VI. 274. Because it is accompany'd with the clearest Light, and all the rational Conviction, that need be desir'd, 275. Whether we compare it with the dark State of Infidelity, 276, 277. Or the Religion of Nature, 278—280. Or with that of the Jews, tho' confessedly of divine Institution, 280—285. It is very disserviceable to Religion to have its Ministers made despicable in the Eyes of the People, VIII. 193. *Religion the best Guardian of Civil Society*, 239.

Religious

Religious Melancholy. See *Despair*.

Remission of Sins. The Doctrine of the Gospel only, I. 131, 132. VI. 285. The Tenor of the Condition, upon which we are emboldened to pray for the Remission of our Sins, 419—426. See *Christians*.

Repentance. What is imply'd by Repentance, VI. 217. A Death-bed Repentance no solid Foundation of Comfort, because there is no rational Ground to believe that such Repentance is true, and real, and acceptable unto God, 217—220. And because the suppos'd Penitent (if it were so) can't have the Satisfaction of knowing it, or depending upon it before he dies, 221—225. A Death-bed Repentance a mad Scheme, VII. 22—24.

Reprobation. No Foundation in Reason or Scripture for the Doctrine of eternal Reprobation, with which some despairing melancholy People affright themselves, IV. 391—393. See *Despair*.

Reproof. The Duty of it neglected by good-natur'd Men; abused by the malicious, IV. 270. Difference between uncharitable Censure and charitable Advice, between bitter Reproach and soft Reproof, 271. The Latter enjoin'd by the Law of *Moses*, grounded upon the Law of Charity, and can't be omitted without Sin, 272. Enforc'd by our Saviour's Authority, 273. The great Obligation that lies upon us to discharge this Duty, seems to arise from a Zeal towards God, 274, 275. From a Compassion for our Neighbour, 275—277. And from the Care and Love, which we owe to our own Souls, 277—281. The great Advantage and Comfort of reproof, whether we respect the Service it would do Religion, 281—283. The good Influence it would have upon Friendship and Conversation, 283—285. Or the Satisfaction accompanying it, and the Reward annex'd to it, 285—287. Rules for our better Direction in the Discharge of this Duty, 287—294.

Restoration. See *Government*.

Resurrection. Some early Hereticks persuaded the *Corinthian* Converts either to doubt of the very Possibility of a Resurrection to come, or else resolving the whole Thing into Mystery and Allegory, to take it for granted, that it was already past, I. 278. The Resurrection

urrection of our Lord Jesus Christ a Matter of Fact most unexceptionably well attested, if only we consider, the Qualifications of the Witnesses to it, 282—290. The Nature and Circumstances of the Fact, as by them related, and the severe Scrutiny that it underwent, 290—295. The Resurrection being admitted, is an irrefragable Proof of the Truth of Christianity in general, 295—298. The Resurrection of Christ is likewise a manifest Proof of our Resurrection; and the Doctrines immediately depending upon it; such as are the Immortality of the Soul, and a future State of just Retribution, 298—300. To continue steadfast in this Faith, is the proper Use and Tendency of this Doctrine, 301—308. The Resurrection of Christ intended as a direct Attestation to the Truth of Christianity, VI. 235. Tho' we have not ocular Demonstration for it, yet we have the Memory of it transmitted to us in undoubted Records, 236.

Retaliation of Injuries. The Precept of our Saviour forbidding us to resist Evil, is not to be understood universally, and without all Restriction, VII. 221. The particular Cases mentioned by our Saviour, *Matth. V. 39, 40, 41.* in which our patient Sufferance of Injuries is requir'd, are not to be construed strictly according to the Letter, 222—225. The general Scope and Aim of the Speaker is here chiefly to be regarded, where our Saviour opposes himself to the false Glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, and particularly to some loose Interpretation of theirs, of the Law of Retaliation, 225, 226. The Doctrine contain'd in these particular Cases amounts to this, That the patient enduring of Injuries is a necessary Duty, so far as the Thing is in any wise fairly practicable, or the Damage tolerable; but that the Study and Practice of Revenge is in no Case allowable or excusable, 226. This Doctrine explained by a Re-examination of the several Cases, 226—234. The Reasonableness of this Doctrine appears from the infinite Patience of God towards us, 234, 235. From his over-ruling Power and Prerogative, 235. From the immediate good Fruits of the Virtue of Patience and Meekness in ourselves, 236. And from the great Blessings to which it is entitled hereafter,

hereafter, 236, 237. This Doctrine is well consistent with the Law of *Moses* concerning Reconciliation, 237—239. A serious, and but too seasonable a Reflection, 239—242.

Revelation. Any Revelation better attested than the Gospel hardly consistent with that Freedom of Choice, which alone can recommend the virtuous Ingenuity of our Faith and Obedience, II. 148—150. 178, 179. See *Gospel*.

Revenge. Judg'd honourable by the Heathens, II. 24. The Revenge of the angry, peevish Mortal; the Man of Honour and nice Resentment expos'd, VI. 439—445. Revenge as much a Sin in such Cases as are cognizable by the Law, as in any other whatsoever, VII. 230. The ill Consequences of Revenge, VIII. 5. Revenge a Symptom of great Weakness, 6—8. In what Senses the revengeful Person is overcome of Evil, 8—13. Some special Directions that may help to prevent this fatal Overthrow. In order to stifle Revenge in its very Conception, it would be advisable to keep a strict Watch upon the Passion of Anger, 13, 14. It will be highly requisite to have an awful Regard to the Hand of Providence, 15, 16. It will be proper to consider under any injurious Provocation, that the Person whom we look upon as a Trespasser against us, is at the same time a Sinner against God, 16, 17. It will be an excellent Expedient to suppress all Thoughts of Revenge, if we choose to consider the ill Offices that we meet with, not strictly as Injuries, but rather as Temptations that are cast in our Way, to interrupt the Course of our Virtue, 17, 18. To imprint all these calm Thoughts the deeper upon our Minds, it will be necessary frequently to reflect upon the sinful State of our own Souls, and the infinite Hazard we are in, if God should be extreme to mark what we have done amiss, 19—21. See *Retaliation*.

Revolution. The late Revolution wonderful and surprizing, V. 259, 260.

Rich and Poor. Observations upon their providential Division: As God is the Maker of all Men, so it is to be supposed, that he made sufficient Provision for the Happiness
VOL. VIII. G g

pineness of them all, VIII, 131—133. Tho' God must be supposed to have provided sufficiently for the Happiness of all Men, as he is the Maker of them all, yet are there wise Reasons notwithstanding for the promiscuous Dispensation of Good and Evil in this World; nor is it to be expected that all should be happy, or any compleatly happy here; and we must acknowledge Things to be well and wisely thus order'd both upon a natural and moral Account, 134—137. Since God has undoubtedly made a sufficient Provision for the Happiness of all Men, and yet it does not appear, that there is such a Provision made for them in this World, it must unavoidably follow, that there will be a future State of just Recompense, and complete Happiness, 137—139. The respective Duty both of Rich and Poor; first towards God, as their common Creator, 139—147. And then towards each other as Fellow-Creatures, 147—153. The Application, 153—163.

Riches. A greedy Desire of Riches, and a fond Reliance upon them, is the most wretched kind of Folly and Improvidence, whether we consider the Worldling, as busied in getting of Wealth, VIII. 50—52. Or vainly using it, 52—55. Or summon'd unwillingly to leave it, 55—58. Or finally to render an Account of it, 58—60. The best Enjoyment, and wisest Improvement of our worldly Wealth, is to be rich towards God, which is the certain Way to recommend ourselves to the divine Benediction, which is ever attending upon the Man, that is so piously, so charitably disposed, under every Circumstance; whether we consider him as employing himself in his lawful Vocation to get an Estate, 61, 62. Or his Behaviour in the Use of that Wealth, with which God hath prosper'd him, 62—64. Or if we look into the State of the charitable Soul, when he comes to die, 65, 66. And to appear before God at the last great Audit to give up his Account, 66—68.

Rights of the Christian Church. The prophane Strain of that Author, VIII. 181, 182.

Righteousness. The Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees defin'd, VII. 136. A great and manifest Defect in that Righteousness, which they taught and practis'd,

138—148. Christians oblig'd to be more strictly, and sincerely, and universally righteous, than the Pharisees either really were, or could pretend to be, upon the Account of the clearer Information that the Christian Religion affords, 149—151. The Graciousness of the Conditions offer'd to us in the Gospel, lays also an additional Obligation upon us, 151—153. The mighty Assistance that the Gospel promises is another Privilege, that still encreases our Obligation, 153—155. The glorious Reward that is promised to us in the Gospel, is a mighty Enhancement to our Obligation, 155, 156.

Rites. Outward Rites of religious Worship (both under the Law and the Gospel) were instituted by God not for their own Sake, but only as suitable Expressions of the inward Sentiments of the Worshipper, VII. 197—199.

Rome. Her Church decently lash'd, II. 112. Rule or Precept of doing as we would be done by, set in its proper Light, VIII. 247—253. The general Ground and Reason of this Precept or Rule enquir'd into, as it is a Law of Nature, and the special Obligation of it, as it is a Law of instituted Religion, 253—262. How far its just Extent reaches, 262—268. How applicable this Rule is to all the good Uses and Purposes for which it was intended, and how well calculated to serve the Interests of Mankind, if duly so apply'd, 269—280.

S.

Sacrament. See *Lord's Supper*; *Communion*.

Sacrifices, one great End of the Institution of Sacrifices; was to beget in the Sinner an humble Sense of his Sins, and a reverential Love of God, I. 120. No Sacrifice for presumptive Sins, 128.

Sadducees. The Pentateuch the only Scripture they admitted, VI. 183.

Salvian, well, upon halting Obedience, VII. 250.

Samaritan. *Simon the Samaritan* dismounted from his fiery Chariot breaks both his Legs, II. 268. VII. 369.

Sanderfon Bishop. His Judgment and Exactness, III. 421.

Sardanapalus. A Prince infamous for his Effeminacy. His Epitaph, VIII. 57.

Sauve-Garde, VIII. 71.

Scales, II. 194.

Scepticism. If nothing is to be believ'd, tho' clear even to Demonstration, because some collateral Doubt or Difficulty may be rais'd upon it, we should be lost in a Maze of Absurdities, and left afloat in endless Scepticism, II. 95. Scepticism lifts up its Head and vaunts itself, 417. Fashionable, V. 184.

Schism. The Schism of the occasional Conformists inexcusable, VI. 44.

Schismatick. His Palliation, V. 438.

Schisms. After open Hostility and Rebellion, the next worst State, and the most Threatning to any Government, is intestine Sedition, especially when form'd into settled Schisms and Factions, VI. 272, 273.

Schoolmaster. His Qualifications and Duty, I. 427, 428. Most of the Institutors of Youth among the *Greeks* and *Romans* were Slaves, bought and sold for Money; and the highest Price that was ever known to be given for one of them in *Pliny's* Time was 3000 *Sefterces*, 437. The Ancients paid Honour to the *Ashes* of the Schoolmasters, and plac'd their Statues among those Persons, whom they held in highest Veneration, 439.

Schoolmen. Their Notion of Contrition, I. 96.

Schools. See *Education*.

Scripture Mysteries, *Errata* in Chronology, difficult Passages, various Readings, not sufficient Objections to the Belief of Scripture, II. 91—96. The Scripture a most authentick and compleat Rule of Faith and Manners, III. 361—366. It was not necessary to the Proof of any Thing from Scripture, that it should be expressed there *totidem verbis*, 366—372.

Sedition intestine, the ill Effects of it, V. 272.

Self-Murder, esteem'd lawful, II. 24. See *Murder*.

Seneca. His gallant Sight, II. 110. His not ill Expedient, VI. 387. His Rants, VII. 412.

Sensuality, plac'd in the foremost Rank of Vices, which are apt to drive or draw Men into Infidelity, II. 184, 185.

Separatists. No publick Security from them, that they keep the Christian Faith whole and undefil'd, VI. 56.

Sequestrators, have vomited up the ill-gotten Wealth, V. 272, 273.

Servants,

Servants, their Conduct and Usage, VII. 294—297.

Set Forms of Prayer. Objections against them answer'd, III. 95—100. See *Prayer*.

Sherlock. His Acuteness and Clearness, III. 421.

Shibboleth. The *Shibboleth* of the *Arians*, III. 370.

Shimei. See *David*.

Ship-Money. Twelve Judges subscribe their Opinion for its Legality, VIII. 111.

Simon Magus. It was a blasphemous Suggestion of some vile Apostates, that our Saviour and his Followers were but a Parcel of Sorcerers, and that they were not unsuccessfully rivall'd by *Simon Magus*, II. 261.

Simplicius, VII. 362.

Sin. An unprofitable Bargain, a wretched Purchase, I. 109—111. In the *Mosaic Law* no Expiation for presumptuous Sins, 128. Remission of Sin upon Repentance, explicitly taught in the Gospel only, 131—134. Herein consists the great Excellence and Pre-eminence of the Gospel, that it has provided an universal Remedy for Sin, for the most heinous Offences as well as the least Peccadillo's, 135. This Doctrine should be a Caution to us, not to make God so ill a Return, as to despise the Riches of his Goodness, 142, 143. And admonish all Christians to break off their Sins by a speedy Repentance, 143, 144. Sin the Sting of Death, because it first introduc'd Mortality into the World, 247—253. Because it is perpetually sharpening its Instruments and Arrows, and many Ways hastening it on, 253—255. Because it greatly increases the Pangs and Terrors of it, when we come to die, 255—257. Law is the Strength of Sin, whether understood of the Law given to *Adam* concerning the Fruit of the Tree, of which he was forbidden to eat, 257, 258. Of the Law of *Moses*, 258—260. Or of the Law of God, taken in a more general, and indefinite Sense for his complete Will, 260, 261. God hath given us an entire Victory over the united Forces of Sin and Death, through our Lord Jesus Christ, 262—268. So glorious a Deliverance is just Matter of Thanksgiving to us, 268—276. What is meant by the Sin against the Holy Ghost, IV. 395, 396. Upon what Ground or Reason the Guilt of one Man's

Sin may be imputed to another, VI. 97, 98. The various Ways by which Men do too commonly render themselves liable to this Imputation, 99—114. An Observation or two in order to Practice, 114—117. The Servitude of Sin a burdensome Yoke, 272. The Distinction of Sins venial and Sins mortal ill grounded, VII. 184. Antiscriptural, 254—256. Sin not the Effect of Nature, Complexion, and Constitution, 285, 286. The vast Difference between the Service of God, and the Service of Sin, 312, 313. See *Holy Ghost*, *Despair*, *Stoicks*.

Sinner. Particular Instances wherein the Servitude of the habitual Sinner doth consist, VII. 297—311. The ruinous Bargain the habitual Sinner makes for himself, 314. See *Enticement of Sinners*.

Σκάνδαλον. The Signification of the Word, I. 313.

Slander. The Nature of it; the several Kinds and Degrees of it, and the usual Arts and Methods of conveying and dispersing of it, VII. 79—90. The Malignity of the Sin, as it is a shameful Abuse of the natural Talent of Speech, 90, 91. As it is a grievous Violation of the Duty we owe to our Neighbour in Point of Veracity, 91, 92. In Point of Charity, 92, 93. In Point of Justice, 94, 95. The Greatness of the Injury done in those Cases not to be estimated, 95, 96. The Causes from which Slander generally springs, 96, 97. The pernicious Consequences that issue from it in its private Walks, 97, 98. And in its more publick Sphere, 98—103.

Slanderer. The Slanderer one of the most detestable Lyars, II. 304, 305. See *Slander*.

Slave. See *Servants*.

Sobriety. A Definition of it, III. 445. The Necessity of it in order to resist the Solicitations of Satan, 445—454.

Socinians. They dispute away the Divinity of Christ, III. 122, 123. Their low Notion of the Sacrament, VIII. 351, 352. Their Exception to the Doctrine of the Equality of Christ with God frivolous, 366.

Socrates. He in Practice avow'd the Community of Wives, II. 23. E'er long perhaps we may hear his Lectures preferr'd before the Sermon on the Mount, and

and his Sufferings made more meritorious than any in our Martyrology, V. 391, 392. The famous Heathen Martyr, VIII. 39.

Solon. With the Heathen Philosophers, it was enough to bear down all the Evidence and Authority of Christ's Doctrine, only to say in Contempt, how comes this Man to be more wise, or more righteous than *Solon*? II. 125.

Soul. The Permanency of the Soul a dark and difficult Problem in Philosophy, I. 299. What is meant by the Loss of the Soul, 339, 340. This Loss consists in a sensible Deprivation of the Happiness of Heaven, 340—342. And in a most sensible Suffering of the Miseries of Hell, 342,—344. The humane Soul a spiritual Substance furnished with excellent Faculties of its own, but it needs much Time, and Teaching and Training to draw forth its natural Powers, 412, 413. The Opinion of its Materiality plainly atheistical, VI. 69. It is not extended, 375. See *Immortality*, *Gain*.

Spanhemius. The pretended Misapplication of Texts cited in the New Testament from the Old, or their want of Pertinence to the Purpose for which they were alledg'd, is a Matter that has been long since carefully consider'd and judiciously accounted for by *Spanhemius*, II. 278, 279.

Spirit. What is meant by the Spirit, V. 380—383. In what Sense the Spirit may be said to be quenched, 383—386. How or by what Means the Spirit may be quenched, 386, 387. Infidelity most desperately bent to quench the Spirit, 387—393. The Spirit quenched by Apostacy, 394, 395. Carnal Security and Presumption apt to quench the Spirit, 395—398. Enthusiasm another provoking Sin that quenches the Spirit, 398—403. Another Sin that is apt to quench the Spirit is spiritual Pride, 404—408. Hypocrisy also quenches the Spirit, 408—410. All wilful and deliberate Sins quench the Spirit, 410—413. The Spirit of God does not act upon us in an irresistible Manner, 415. We ought to take care to cherish and improve those spiritual Gifts and Graces, which God has conferr'd upon us, 417, 418. And to reverence our

- own Consciences, 418, 419. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are either extraordinary and temporary, or ordinary and perpetual, VII. 343, 344. The Possibility of our being assisted by the Grace of God's Holy Spirit, 345—348. The Necessity of it in our present Condition, 348—352. The Heathens not so clear in this Point, 352, 353. See *Infidelity*.
- Stoicks*. They abound in swelling Words of Vanity, I. 178. Materialists, II. 110. Their absurd Paradox, that all Sins are equal, VII. 252. Their τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῶν. 352. They make bold to equal their wise Man, if not prefer him, to their Gods, 412.
- Subjects*. It is their Duty to join their Endeavours to their Prayers, and contribute what lies in them to the Preservation of Peace, and Advancement of Religion, V. 282—289.
- Submission* to the Reprehensions of Pastors and Governours, tho' subject to the like Passions and Infirmities with themselves, the Duty of the People, I. 52—60. See *People*.
- Suborn:rs*. Sworn Enemies to all Truth and Honesty, to every Man's Property, Peace and Safety, II. 358, 359.
- Suetonius*. He expressly mentions that in the Reign of Tiberius, there liv'd such a Person as Jesus Christ, II. 54. The Expectation of the Messiah known to him and Tacitus, 72. V. 337.
- Sufferings* of Christ. See *Christ*.
- Synecdoche*. A usual Figure in Scripture, I. 96.
- Syrac:se*, VII. 309.

T.

- Tacitus*. He asserts that Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, II. 54. And inserts it in his History, as a Thing worthy of Remark, that a mighty Prince was about that Time to arise from the East, V. 337. His Conjecture upon the Breast of Tyrants, VIII. 222.
- Tamerlane*, VII. 321.
- Tant mount*, I. 157.
- Temple*. The rebuilding of it miraculously interrupted, II. 57.
- Temptation*. What is meant by Temptation, III. 296—303. VII. 266—269. What is meant by being led into

into Temptation, III. 303—308. 312, 313. The holy Affections and Dispositions that ought to accompany that Petition of the Lord's Prayer, 314—317. God not the proper and efficient Cause of Temptation, VII. 270—273. This Assertion clear'd from some Exceptions, 278—285.

Tenderness and mutual Charity recommended, I. 34.

Tertullian. *Varro* the learned *Roman*, as *Tertullian* remarks, reckons up no less than three hundred several *Jupiters*, II. 9. He appeals to the *Roman* Register of Books for the Confirmation of that preternatural Eclipse, which happened at our Saviour's Crucifixion, 55. He boasts of near a Majority of Christians in every City, 233. In spite of Prejudice the Doctrine of Christ did triumphantly prevail over him, 238. He stakes his Life upon the Confession of the Devils that they were no Gods, 268. His Testimony concerning the Lord's Prayer, III. 86. The most heterodox of any of the Fathers, V. 112. His Arguments in Prejudice of the Priesthood confuted by the learned Mr. *Dodwell*, 114.

Testament. The New Testament an exact Counterpart of the Old, II. 86, 87.

Tetter, II. 265.

Theodoret. A very satisfactory Account of the τὸ ὁμολογιῶν of the Son, in *Theodoret's Ecclesiastical History*, III. 369.

Thoughts. A Word of Comfort to those, who complain of being troubled with evil Thoughts, VI. 410.

Tiberius, II. 54.

Tillotson. His Easiness and Address, III. 421.

Time. When the Fulness of Time was come, God sent forth his Son, &c. The Will and Wisdom of God fix'd this determinate Period, V. 331, 332. No need of sending the Messiah immediately after the Serpent had compass'd our first Parents Fall, 332—335. It may be presum'd, that God wisely made choice of that Juncture of Time, to send his Son into the World, when the World was in the greatest Expectation of him, 335—338. That Juncture of Time was pitch'd upon as most convenient to send forth his Son, 338—341. That Juncture of Time, the fittest for God to send forth his Son, when the State of Affairs seem'd most to require it,

it, 341—346. Hence we should learn to restrain all useless and unwarrantable Curiosity about the Reasons of Christ's Coming when he did, 347, 348. And to admire and adore the Wisdom of God, 348, 349. We should consider the Person from whom, and by whom this Embassy was sent, 353—359. The Nature and Condition in which God sent forth his Son, 359—364. The End and Purpose for which God sent forth his Son, 364—369. And the Loving Kindness of the Lord in sending his Son, 369—372. Inferences, 372—377.

Titillations of Sense, VII. 274.

Titus Vespasian, V. 16.

Tongue. A cutting and stabbing Weapon, VI. 443, 444.

Torments. No Objection can lie against an Eternity of Torments, as being cruel and unjust, unless the Reason of that Objection be something more evident and undeniable than all the Declarations of Scripture to the contrary; and such a Reason will be hard to be met with, I. 391. Hell-Torments tho' equal in Duration, yet are piously supposed not to be equally intense, V. 436. See *Hell*, *Punishment*.

Tradition. Groundless and Uncertain, III. 364, 365.

Trajan, V. 16.

Translation. See *Enoch*.

Transubstantiation. It has neither Scripture nor Tradition in its Favour, III. 365. The Inconvenience and Absurdity of it, VIII. 326—336. See *Papists*.

Tree of Life, and Tree of Knowledge, Conjectures about them, I. 248.

Trust. The respective Trust of the spiritual Pastor and the civil Magistrate, I. 60—62.

Truth, is a Debt in which all Men have an indisputable Right, II. 283. How far we are bound to keep to exact Truth, 344—362. And upon a just Occasion to declare it, 362—370. It is expedient to lye for the Truth, 398. Truth in Relation to an assertory Oath implies an exact Agreement between our Thoughts and Words, IV. 63, 64. In Relation to a promissory Oath, it implies this, and a just Conformity in our Actions to them both, 65. See *Lye*.

Tully,

Tully. Eager of sending his Son to *Athens*, I. 426. He faulters shamefully in explaining the Nature of the Deity, II. 9. A feeble Defender of the Immortality of the Soul, II. 25. His fine Representation of a libinous Person, VII. 305. His unadvised Saying, 352.
Tutor. His Management of Pupils, I. 429, 430.
Tythes and Oblations should be punctually paid, VIII. 146.

U.

Valentinus. His prodigious Conceit, II. 440.
Varro. He reckons up three hundred several *Jupiters*, II. 9.
Ventidius Cumanus. *Felix* his Collegue, and Successor, VII. 6.
Ventricle, II. 295.
Venus, II. 10.
Veracity. The Veracity of God a Proof of the Truth of the Gospel, II. 88, 100.
Verulam Lord. An Oracle of Law and Learning, IV. 340.
Vice, justly call'd bitter, IV. 2. Frequently hereditary in a Family, VIII. 95—97.
Virtue, properly sweet, IV. 2. A Definition of it, 337. Virtue has a Tendency to encrease Faith by a natural and moral Efficacy, and by the Blessing of God upon it, 356—367.
Vicious Habits. Upon what mighty Disadvantage Men indulge themselves in them, VII. 313, 314.
Unbelief. A strong Opiate, II. 184. Ambition and Vain-glory give the Inclination an unhappy Biass towards Unbelief, 185—189. Self-Conceit apt to betray Men, who are strongly possessed with it, into this fatal Snare of the Devil, 189—192. It is a confident Falshood to assert, That it is not in a Man's Power to believe or disbelieve what he will; and that therefore his Fault (if he incurs any) is involuntary, 193—198.
Unbeliever. Whether an Unbeliever (in the Gospel Sense of the Word) one who does not admit so much as the first Principle of Religion, can be a good moral Man, II. 199—205. Whether such an Unbeliever as does not give Credit to reveal'd Religion, can be a good moral

ral Man, 206—212. Whether such Unbelievers, as do embrace what is plain in the Christian Revelation, that is, the Morality, but can't give their Assent to the sublimer Doctrines, which are called Mysteries, can be good moral Men, 212—222.

Unchaste. See *Libidinous*.

Uncleanness. The Habits of it most wretchedly ensnaring and enslaving, I. 83—85.

Universities. Ours preferr'd to all the publick Academies in *Europe*, I. 431. See *Youth*.

Unmercifulness, or *Uncharitableness* wilfully persisted in, is a Sin that forfeits all Title to the Mercy of God, VII. 210—212.

Uriah. The Guilt of his Blood lies principally at *David's* Door, VI. 100. See *David*, *Bathsheba*.

Usurper. See *Cromwell*. Lawless Usurpers, V. 247.

W.

WALLIS Dr. The humble Opinion of one of his late Adversaries, dressed up in his own modest Words, III. 383.

War. Be it never so just and honourable, is still more or less calamitous, and ought ever to be reckon'd among the Judgments of God, VIII. 232.

Watchfulness, defin'd, III. 455. The Necessity of it in our Christian Warfare, 455—62.

Wealth. Worldly Wealth a perishable Commodity, I. 306. It tempts Men to be insolent and forgetful of God, VII. 275. See *Riches*.

Wickedness. See *Iniquity*, *Reason*.

Will. The Will has oftentimes the chief Stroke in determining our Assent or Dissent to such Things as are proposed to our Belief; an undeniable Instance of it, II. 193—198. What the Will of God is that we are to do, III. 217, 218. The Manner of doing the Will of God taken, as *Grotius* imagines, from the Motions of heavenly Bodies, which is regular, steady and uniform, 218. Or from the more excellent Nature, and noble Employment of the Angels in Heaven, 219—221. The Meaning of the Petition, *Thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven*, 221—223. The holy Affections and Dispositions, which a due Confi-

Consideration of it is apt to stir up in our Hearts, 226, 227.

Wisdom. Recommended to the Study and Pursuit of all the Sons of Men, I. 409, 410. The Wisdom of Looking at Things not seen, VI. 227. What we are to understand by Things which are seen, 229. What by Things not seen, *ibid.* Between these two States a manifest Difference in Point of Evidence, 229. And a mighty Disproportion in Point of Duration, 230. The Difference in Point of Evidence between a present and visible State, and a future and invisible one doth not imply any Reason of Doubt concerning the Existence of such an invisible State, 231—242. Tho' it were not so absolutely certain, as it appears to be, that there is such an invisible State, yet the mighty Disproportion in Point of Duration makes it infinitely more worthy of our Care and Concern, than any Thing in this transitory World can be, 246—254. The Things invisible must be our chief Scope and Aim, 254—256. And the Things visible are to be made subservient to our future and eternal Interest, 257—267. The Properties of religious Wisdom; it is pure: This Purity may stand oppos'd either to Carnality, VII. 372, 373. or to Hypocrisy, 373—375. This Purity both in Conversation and Intention is an essential Property of the Wisdom that is from above, 375, 376. Religious Wisdom is peaceable, 376—381. It is gentle and easy to be entreated, 381—385. It is full of Mercy and good Fruits, 386. And it is without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy, 388—394. This Description of religious Wisdom may teach us to distinguish between Religion that is truly such, and that which is only pretended, 394—396. And make us in Love with the Practice of that Religion, which appears so very amiable in the Idea, 396—398.

Witchcraft, V. 427, 428.

Witches. The common Observation upon them, VIII.

Woman. A strange Woman to be avoided, I. 86.

Word of God. See *Hearing the Word of God.*

Works. See *Flesh.*

World.

World. What the Nature and present State of the World is, I. 336—339. The Love of the World, and an undue Regard to secular Interest was from the Beginning a main Hindrance to the Progress of Christianity among both Jews and Gentiles, and is among those that call themselves Christians, II. 114—118. A true Measure of that Indifferency, or Moderation towards the Things of this World; recommended by the Apostle, I Cor. vii: 29, 30, 31. IV. 412—420. A due Consideration of the Shortness of Life, added to the Mutability of worldly Things, an excellent Remedy against all unreasonable Fondness for the Things of the World, 420—436. An Indifferency for the World would make our Lives easy, 437, 438. Prepare us for Heaven, 438, 439. And make our Death comfortable, 439—441. What is meant by the End of the World in Christ's Promise of being always present with his Church, V. 2—10. See *Faith, Gain.*

Worship. The Heathens deplorably ignorant of the Worship, which properly belongs to the Deity, II. 10. See *Heathens.* The Jews not altogether Strangers to the Nature of God, and divine Worship, 10—13. In what internal and external Worship consists, III. 172—174. In what Particulars the Respect due to sacred Things consists, 177—185. Image Worship abominable, 195, 196. A wilful Neglect of God's Worship a grievous Prophanation, 198—200. Indecency of Behaviour in it gives Disturbance and Scandal to the Congregation, 200—202. Worship of Images in the *Roman Church* can't be acquitted of Idolatry, IV. 40.

Wrath of Man. The Outrage of it in no wise conformable to God's righteous Will, V. 191—193. No proper Instrument for God's Work, 193—197. The Cruelty which the enraged Wrath of Man hath too hasty a Recourse to, a very improper Means to be employ'd in the Propagation of God's true Religion, 197—200. It is plainly contrary both to the Direction and Example of the Blessed Jesus, 200—202. At the beginning, Providence made Choice of a different Method to plant the Christian Faith in the World, and yet a Method marvelously prevailing and successful, 203—208.

208. Suitable Reflections for the 5th of November,
209—226.

Y.

YOUTH. What Kind of Youth are not fit to be
sent to the Universities, I. 430, 431.

Z.

ZANCHIUS, VIII. 358.

Zeal. The happy Fruits of Enthusiastic Zeal, II.

113. The Nature and Qualifications of godly Zeal,
378—401. Recommended to Practice by Motives and
Arguments, 407—423. Directions about the laudable
and conscionable Exercise of our Zeal, 426—448. See

Bigottry, *Zehu*.

Zedekiah, VIII. 81.

Zimri and Cosbi, I. 156.

Zophar, VIII. 100.

A TABLE of the several Texts of Scripture preached upon in the Eight Volumes of Dean Moss's Sermons.



	Texts.		Vol.	Serm.
<i>Levit.</i>	19 17	—	4	11
<i>Numb.</i>	23 10	—	6	8
<i>2 Sam.</i>	12 7	—	1	1, 2, 3, 4
<i>Psal.</i>	42 11	—	4	14
	50 20	—	7	4
	51 17	—	1	5, 6
	97 1	—	5	8
<i>Prov.</i>	1 10	—	6	3
	4 13	—	1	16
	23	—	6	14
	25, 26, 27.	—	6	16
	22 2	—	8	4
	27 1	—	7	13
	4	—	4	7, 8
<i>Eccles.</i>	8 11	—	8	6
<i>Isaiah</i>	5 20	—	4	1, 2
<i>Jerem.</i>	4 2	—	4	3, 4.
	7 4	—	5	6
	23 24	—	6	13
<i>Lament.</i>	5 7	—	8	3
<i>Matth.</i>	5 17	—	7	5
	20	—	7	6
	21, 22.	—	7	7
	23, 24, 25, 26.	—	7	8
	29, 30.	—	1	12
	38, 39, 40, 41.	—	7	9
	6 9	—	3	7, 8
	10	—	3	9
	11	—	3	10
	12	—	3	11
	13	—	3	12, 13
	14, 15	—	6	15
	7 7, 8.	—	3	1, 2

Matth.

	Texts.	Vol.	Serm.
<i>Matth.</i>	7 12	8	7
	11 21, 22	6	5, 6
	28	6	10
	28 20	5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
<i>Mark</i>	4 24	3	14, 15
<i>Luke</i>	3 4, 5	5	10
	11 1, 2	3	3, 4, 5
	2	3	6
	13	7	14
	12 1	7	2
	21	8	2
	13 5	4	9
<i>John</i>	3 19	2	1, 2, 3, 4
	8 34	7	12
<i>Acts</i>	19 20	2	7, 8
	24 25	7	1
<i>Rom.</i>	12 9	7	3
	11	2	12, 13, 14
	21	8	1
	15 13	6	12
<i>1 Cor.</i>	7 29, 30, 31	4	15
	10 16	8	9
	11 1	1	7, 8
	13 13	4	12
	14 26	6	1, 2
	15 55, 56, 57	1	10
	58	1	11
<i>2 Cor.</i>	4 5	8	5
	18	6	9
<i>Galat.</i>	4 5, 6	5	11, 12
	5 19, 20, 21	5	14
<i>Ephes.</i>	4 26	4	5, 6
	35	2	9, 10, 11
<i>Philipp.</i>	2 3	7	16
	5, 6, 7, 8	8	10
	4 6	4	16
<i>Coloss.</i>	3 15	8	8
<i>1 Thess.</i>	5 19	5	13
<i>1 Tim.</i>	2 1, 2	5	9
	5 22	6	4
<i>2 Tim.</i>	1 10	6	7

<i>Hebr.</i>	3	12	—	2	5, 6
<i>James</i>	1	20	—	5	7
	2	10	—	7	10
	3	17	—	7	15
	4	12	—	4	10
1 <i>Pet.</i>	4	7	—	3	16
2 <i>Pet.</i>	1	5	—	4	13
1 <i>John</i>	5	4	—	6	11

N. B. In the Eighth Volume of these Sermons, a Mistake being made in numbering the Pages from Page 273 to the End; till that is rectify'd, the Reader is desir'd to subtract 12 from any Number of the Eighth Volume in the Index after 272; and that will give him the Page of the Eighth Volume sought for. Thus $273 - 12 = 261$.



A TABLE of the Places of Scripture occasionally explained in the Eight Volumes of Dean Moss's Sermons.

GENESIS.			
Chap.	Ver.		Vol. Page.
1	27	—	6 167
2	3	— —	5 70
	17	—	1 249
	17	—	6 171
49	9	— —	5 339
EXODUS.			
7	13	—	3 305
9	16	—	7 281—284.
20	6	— —	5 56
LEVITICUS.			
10	3	—	3 167
NUMBERS.			
16	3	—	5 36
DEUTERONOMY.			
28	17	—	8 52
30	12, 13	— —	1 112
1 SAMUEL.			
9	13	— —	5 70
2 SAMUEL.			
24	1	— —	3 304, 305
1 KINGS.			
8	49	— —	3 147
		H h 2	PSALMS.

Chap.	Ver.	PSALMS.	Vol.	Page.
25	11	—	3	338
	14	—	4	364
34	8, 9, 10	—	4	463
51	12, 13	—	1	131
65	2	—	3	22
79	9, 10	—	3	338
97	1	—	5	228
119	99, 100	—	4	364
	138, 144	—	4	18
148	6	—	3	218

PROVERBS.

14	29	—	4	145
	30	—	4	192
16	32	—	8	29
19	11	—	8	30
30	8, &c.	—	3	310

ECCLESIASTES.

1	14	—	4	451
6	1	—	8	54
8	11	—	8	206, 207

ISAIAH.

1	16, 18	—	1	132, 133
---	--------	---	---	----------

JEREMIAH.

7	4	—	5	149, 150
23	10	—	4	104
31	33, 34	—	1	132

EZEKIEL.

18	30	—	1	132
----	----	---	---	-----

DANIEL.

12	3	—	4	51
----	---	---	---	----

HOSEA.

7	16	—	7	78
---	----	---	---	----

JOEL.

Chap. Ver. JOEL. Vol. Page.

2 13 I 132

ECCLESIASTICUS.

18 23 3 23

28 3 6 427

41 I 8 57

MATTHEW.

3 133

5 27, 28 I 311

34 4 74, 75

37 4 89

39, 40 3 283

39, 40, 41 6 434

48 I 186

6 14, 15 6 421, 422

26, 30 4 449

27 4 452

31, 32 4 448

33 3 36

7 10 3 7

12 8 246

11 28, 29 6 272, 273

16 24 I 186, 187

18 21, 22 432, 431

22 40 4 317

26 26, 28 8 333, 334

28 16, 18 5 32

20 2, 3

MARK.

16 15 5 32

LUKE.

3 4, 5 5 299-303

9 55 I 158

10 18 2 268

16 8 I 158, 159

14 5 309

17 3 6 431

Chap.

Chap.	Ver.	LUKE.	Vol.	Page
18	I	—	3	47, 48
	II	—	I	97
	II, 12, 13, 14	—	5	407, 408
19	20, 21	—	6	148, 149
22	19, 20	—	5	67—71.
24	47	—	I	133

JOHN.

8	12	—	4	365
	33	—	7	292, 293
14	16	—	5	5, 6
	16	—	5	15
17	5	—	8	361
20	21	—	5	32
21	22	—	5	16, 17

ACTS.

2	39	—	5	8
	41	—	5	103—105
5	5	—	5	105—108
8	4	—	5	86—89
9	18	—	5	110, 111
10	33	—	3	403
	48	—	5	108—110
13	2	—	5	97—100.
	38, 39	—	I	133

ROMANS.

I	24, 26, 28	—	3	307
2	12	—	6	148
3	23	—	I	269
	23, 24, 25	—	I	136—138
5	7, &c.	—	I	259—260
	12, 13, 14	—	I	251, 252
7	19	—	7	298, 299
8	26	—	3	78, 132
	32	—	3	150
10	5, 6, 7, 8	—	7	152
	13, 14	—	5	27, 28
12	19	—	5	193, 194
13	I	—	8	108, 109
14	17	—	3	209, 210

I CORIN.

Chap.	Ver.	1 CORINTH.	Vol.	Page.
2	4	— —	2	270
10	16	— —	8	324, 325
	16, 17	— —	5	72---78
12	17	— —	5	64, 65
	28	— —	5	6, 7
	31	— —	4	298
13	4	— —	7	61, 62
	5	— —	7	62---64
	6	— —	7	64, 65, 93
	8, &c.	— —	4	304
14	15	— —	3	92, 97
	31	— —	5	62-64.
2 CORINTH.				
2	9	— —	1	341
4	18	— —	6	246, 247
5	21	— —	3	275
GALATIANS.				
4	4, 5	— —	5	329
5	17	— —	5	411, 412
	24	— —	1	186, 187. 316
EPHESIANS.				
4	11	— —	5	6, 7
	12	— —	3	44
	12, 13	— —	5	8, 9
5	11	— —	4	280
PHILIPPIANS.				
1	14	— —	5	96, 97
2	3	— —	7	416, 417
	6, 7	— —	8	363-369
4	7	— —	4	468
COLOSSIANS.				
3	5	— —	1	316
	15	— —	8	287, 288.
	16	— —	5	60, 61
1 THESSALONIANS.				
5	11, 12, 13	— —	5	60-62
				1 Tim.

The INDEX

Chap.	Ver.		
1	15	—	4 312
2	1, 2	—	5 265, 266
	8	—	8 321
6	9	—	4 450
	17, 18, 19	—	6 259, 260

2 TIMOTHY.

1	10	—	6 165
	12	—	6 337

HEBREWS.

3	12	—	2 169
	13	—	5 60
5	5	—	5 35
10	24, 25	—	5 59, 60
11	1	—	4 309
	8, 9, 10	—	6 344
	17, 18, 19	—	6 345
13	7	—	5 62
	10	—	5 52, 53
	17	—	5 62

JAMES.

1	6, 7	—	3 47
	13	—	3 299
4	6	—	5 405
5	16	—	3 44

1 PETER.

2	5, 9	—	5 48, 49
---	------	---	----------

2 PETER.

1	19	—	1 133
---	----	---	-------

1 JOHN.

3	3	—	4 315, 316
	15	—	4 204
	15	—	6 444, 445
4	20	—	6 422, 423
5	3	—	4 323
	10	—	2 169
	14	—	3 31

REVELATIONS.

1	6	—	5 48, 49
---	---	---	----------

F I N I S.



Chap. V.

2

61

12

13

42

22

44

22

44

22

44

22

44

22

44

22

44

22

44